Learning together:
A study of six B.A. completion cohort programs in early care and education
Year II report

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LEARNING TOGETHER
YEAR 2 FINDINGS

Introduction

The *Learning Together* longitudinal study focuses on four counties' efforts—with county, First 5, and private foundation support—to expand bachelor's degree opportunities in early care and education (ECE) for adults currently working in the field. The student cohort model—in which small groups of ECE students with similar interests and characteristics pursue a bachelor's degree together, and receive targeted support services—has emerged in Alameda, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, and San Francisco Counties, with programs at Antioch University, California State University-East Bay (CSU-EB), Mills College, San Francisco State University (SFSU), San Jose State University (SJSU), and the University of La Verne (ULV).

The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment is implementing a five-year longitudinal study of each student cohort, as well as periodic examinations of institutional change at selected colleges and universities. In Year 2 of the study, which concludes at the end of June 2009, we collected an updated list of students enrolled in each program; conducted brief in-person and telephone interviews with the students in October and November 2008; conducted longer telephone interviews with students from January to March 2009; and interviewed key stakeholders from two institutions of higher education in March 2009. The following report is a review of the Year 2 study findings.

Part I: Students

Study Design

Year 2 Survey Universe and Survey Sample

In October and November 2008, the study team collected an updated list of students enrolled in each of the six B.A. completion cohort programs, and conducted brief in-person and telephone interviews with the students. We attempted interviews with all eligible students, defined as those who were currently enrolled in one of the cohort programs, were on non-medical leave but still enrolled, or had graduated in 2008. We did not attempt interviews with any students who had left their cohort program before graduating or who were on medical leave. At the end of these Fall 2008 interviews, we scheduled appointments with each student for an in-depth interview to be completed between January and March 2009. Since Fall 2007, when the student interviews began, 12 students have left their cohort programs without graduating. (See Table 1.)

**Table 1. Student Retention and Attrition in
Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs**

	Students on original cohort list, Fall 2007	Students added to cohort list in Fall 2008*	Original number of students in cohort	Students who left cohort before graduation, as of March 2009	Students who had graduated as of March 2009	Students in cohort as of March 2009
California State University-East Bay	14	1	15	3	0	12
Mills College	6	0	6	0	1	5
San Francisco State University	33	1	34	1	13	20
San Jose State University	35	0	35	6	0	29
Antioch University	24	0	24	2	1	21
University of La Verne	12	0	12	0	5	7
TOTAL	*124*	*2*	*126*	*12*	*20*	*94*

*These students were part of the cohort in Fall 2007, but their names were not given to CSCCE until Fall 2008.

Year 2 Data Collection

The Fall 2008 interviews averaged seven minutes in length. Approximately 95 percent of the eligible students from the six programs participated, with individual program completion rates ranging from 88 to 100 percent. (See Table 2.) Of the 110 students we interviewed, five had graduated from the University of La Verne cohort, one was on non-medical leave from Mills College, one had graduated from Mills, and the rest were currently enrolled and attending their cohort classes.

During, January, February, and March 2009, we conducted interviews with 102 of the 110 students we had interviewed in the fall. These interviews ranged from 10 to 60 minutes, at an average of 25 minutes.

Table 2. Fall 2008 Survey Response Rate

	Universe for Fall 2008 interviews	**Eligible for Fall 2008 interviews**	**Fall 2008 completed interviews**	**Fall 2008 response rate**
California State University-East Bay	13	13	12	92%
Mills College	6	6	6	100%
San Francisco State University	33	33	29	88%
San Jose State University	30	30	30	100%
Antioch University	23	22	22	100%
University of La Verne	12	12	11	92%
TOTAL	*117*	*116*	*110*	*95%*

Table 3. Winter 2009 Survey Response Rate

	Universe for Winter 2009 interviews	Eligible for Winter 2009 interviews	Winter 2009 completed interviews	Winter 2009 response rate
California State University-East Bay	12	11	11	100%
Mills College	6	6	5	83%
San Francisco State University	29	29	25	86%
San Jose State University	30	28	28	100%
Antioch University	22	22	22	100%
University of La Verne	11	11	11	100%
TOTAL	*110*	*107*	*102*	*95%*

Year 2 Survey Completion and Response Rates

We compared the students responding to the Fall 2008 interview with those we had interviewed at length during the first phase of the study (Winter 2008) to assess any differences between the two samples. There were no significant demographic differences in terms of ethnicity, gender, age, country of origin, or primary languages spoken at home among students participating in the two interviews. (See January 2009 Interim Report.) Additionally, there were no significant differences in terms of student job responsibilities or subsidy status of their places of employment. Finally, we also compared the small sample of students (N=8) who had left their cohorts between Fall 2008 and the Winter 2009 interviews, and found no significant differences for language, age, gender, ethnicity, or country of origin.

Data Overview

As in Year 1, three sources of data inform this report: the cohort program databases, and the two telephone surveys.

The purpose of the Fall 2008 interview was to re-establish our relationships with the students and to update their employment information. We also asked the students one open-ended question specific to their particular cohort program. (See January 2009 Interim Report, pages 14-22.) The Winter 2009 interview included closed-ended questions, asking students to assess:

- personal and program challenges, both when they started the cohort program and currently;

- their need for various program features and services, both when they started the program and currently;

- changes in their knowledge and skills resulting from participating in the program;

- the content and structure of their practicum experience; and

- the learning environment at their workplaces, including support for their professional development.

Twenty percent of the students in the sample had completed their degrees at the time of the interview; we asked these students additional closed-ended questions about the impact of earning their degree on their ECE career in terms of:

- any changes in place of employment, job title or responsibilities, and compensation;

- their participation in ECE-related professional activities; and

- ongoing contact with other members of their cohort.

Graduates were also asked open-ended questions about additional education or training that would be helpful to them at their jobs or to meet their career goals.

The sample sizes ("N") reported in the following tables and charts are based on the Winter 2009 interviews. Unless otherwise stated, figures and tables in the body of the report contain data for students in all six cohorts combined; the supplemental figures and tables in the Appendix contain data for the individual cohorts.

Our discussion focuses on the sample as a whole, and notes variations among the cohorts. These variations have not been tested for statistical significance because of the small number of students within each cohort; however, we did test for statistical significance for selected variables for the full samples. We provide commentary on

differences when appropriate, but we caution readers to be aware of the small sample sizes of individual cohorts.

Data Analysis

Data coding and analysis were completed in several steps. First, closed-ended questions were coded based on students' responses, and coded data were entered into an Excel data file. Data from 10 percent of all interviews was entered into the computer twice to check the accuracy of our data entry procedures. Next, using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 14.0), we computed frequencies of all closed-ended questions for each individual cohort and for the entire sample. The final step involved performing inferential statistical tests (e.g., chi-square analyses) to examine trends in the data. All significant results are reported at a *p* value of .05 or better.

Findings

Students' Assessment of Their Challenges and Needs for Services Over Time

In order to help members of the ECE workforce gain access to higher education and succeed in completing a degree, it is critical to understand the particular challenges they face, and how a program's structure and services can minimize or exacerbate these challenges.

During Year 1 of the study, students identified the following areas of challenge:
- academic skills;
  - o academic writing;
  - o academic reading;
  - o math; and
  - o academic work in English (for students whose primary language was not English).
- school success skills:
  - o study skills;
  - o presenting information orally; and
  - o using computers and appropriate software.

- personal challenges:
  - balancing work and school, and
  - balancing family and school.

These areas of challenge were reiterated by the faculty members and other institutional representatives whom we interviewed for the study. Because cohort programs typically span at least two years, there are program design and cost implications in understanding students' need for or reliance on various program features and supports over time. To explore these issues, we asked students to rate how they had viewed each of the following challenges when they started taking classes in the cohort program, and how they rated those same challenges at the time of the interview or, if they had graduated, during their last semester of classes. Using a Likert scale, we asked students to rate each topic from 1 (not a challenge at all) to 5 (extremely challenging).

Students and faculty members identified academic writing, in particular, as a challenge, and several programs mentioned having increased their efforts to help students improve their writing skills. As shown in Figure 1, however, students perceived that their academic writing challenges had diminished significantly after approximately two years in the program. Whereas one-half of students said they saw academic writing as very or extremely challenging when they started taking classes, only ten percent did so at the time of the Winter 2009 interview. Across all of the programs, the percentage of students who currently viewed academic writing as no challenge, or not much of one, increased. As shown in the Appendix, this shift in student perception was smaller at California State University-East Bay, San Francisco State University, and San Jose State University.

Figure 1: Academic Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

Category	Academic Writing Start of Cohort (N=101)	Academic Writing Winter 2009 (N=102)	Academic Reading Start of Cohort (N=101)	Academic Reading Winter 2009 (N=102)	Math Start of Cohort (N=81)	Math Winter 2009 (N=74)	Academic English* Start of Cohort (N=39)	Academic English* Winter 2009 (N=40)
Very/extremely challenging	51	10	39	10	52	24	46	13
Fairly challenging	22	33	27	23	21	16	31	30
Not/Not much of a challenge	28	57	35	68	27	60	23	58

Percentage of students (y-axis, 0–100)

* Students who spoke a primary language other than English at home.

Legend: ☐ Not/Not much of a challenge ☐ Fairly challenging ■ Very/extremely challenging

Student reports also revealed increasing confidence in the areas of academic reading and math. As shown in Figure 1, 35 percent of students said they considered academic reading no challenge or not much of a challenge when they started taking classes, but nearly twice as many (68 percent) felt this way in Winter 2009. Students across all programs, with the exception of Mills College, reported a shift toward viewing academic reading as less challenging. Because of differences in cohort program design and matriculation requirements, fewer students responded to questions about math-related challenges. (Some students completed their math requirements prior to entering the B.A. cohort program, and programs had different course requirements related to statistics and other subjects requiring math skills). Among all students, there was a marked difference in percentage between their view of math as extremely or very challenging when they started taking classes and at the time of the Winter 2009 interview. One exception to this pattern was identified at CSU-EB, as shown in the Appendix. It may be that the students who continued to see math as very or extremely challenging had yet to complete their math requirements, and we caution readers about the small sample size. Since only one

Mills College student responded to the math question, specific Mills College results are excluded in the Appendix.

Approximately two-fifths of the students reported that they spoke a primary language other than English in their homes. We asked these students to assess how challenging they felt it was to complete their classes successfully in English. As shown in Figure 1, 46 percent of these students said they considered this very or extremely challenging when they began the cohort program, but only 13 percent did so at the time of the Winter 2009 interview. Thirty percent continued to consider coursework in English fairly challenging, and 58 percent considered it to be no challenge or not much of one. As shown in the Appendix, we identified one exception to this pattern at CSU-EB, but we caution readers about the small sample size. No Mills College students reported speaking a primary language at home other than English.

Because many of the cohort program students had not attended school for years, many found it necessary to brush up on their study skills and to improve their computer literacy. As working adults, often with families, many felt a need to become better organized in order to manage multiple demands on their time. For those who had last attended school when typewriters, library card catalogs, and overhead projectors or poster boards were the tools of the trade, building school success skills in the computer age was sometimes a challenge. Even some who had attended school more recently, or who were already computer literate, experienced other challenges related to study skills, oral presentations, and computer use. But as shown in Figure 2, many students experienced a significant decrease in such challenges between the time they began their cohort program and the Winter 2009 interview.

Figure 2: Skills-Related Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

Category	Not/Not much of a challenge	Fairly challenging	Very/extremely challenging
Study Skills Start of Cohort (N=101)	34	27	40
Study Skills Winter 2009 (N=102)	76	9	16
Oral Presentations Start of Cohort (N=101)	27	18	55
Oral Presentations Winter 2009 (N=102)	70	16	15
Using Computers Start of Cohort (N=101)	42	20	39
Using Computers Winter 2009 (N=102)	79	16	5

Percentage of students (Y-axis: 0 to 100)

During Year 1 of the study, almost all of the students mentioned that balancing the demands of school, work, and family life was a challenging aspect of their cohort program experience. While many mentioned such feelings as "never being able to give 100 percent to anything," they also talked about how the support of family members, employers and coworkers had helped make it possible to handle these new challenges. As indicated in Figure 3, nearly one-third of the students across all cohorts reported that balancing work and school had become less challenging as the program progressed, and 20 percent felt this way about balancing school and family—suggesting that after approximately two years in school, many had learned to cope with these added pressures. We explored whether students' assessments reflected differences in course loads. Slightly more than one-half (55 percent) of students were taking three or more courses when we spoke with them. Notably, students taking fewer courses were more likely to say that balancing work and school (t (75)=1.99, p=.05) or balancing work and family (t (75)=3.36, p <.01) was very or extremely challenging. We need additional data to explore this issue.

Figure 3: Personal Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

	Not/Not much of a challenge	Fairly challenging	Very/extremely challenging
Balancing Work and School Start of Cohort (N=101)	18	18	64
Balancing Work and School Winter 2009 (N=102)	45	23	32
Balancing Family and School Start of Cohort (N=101)	25	27	49
Balancing Family and School Winter 2009 (N=102)	43	28	29

Percentage of students (y-axis: 0 to 100)

Faculty and administrators who are responsible for designing and implementing cohort programs—along with policy makers and funders—share the goals of developing the necessary program features and services to help students complete their degrees successfully. But at the same time, these stakeholders are eager to control costs without compromising the programs' intent. It therefore becomes important to determine whether cohort students might experience a diminishing need over time for certain program features or services, as participating in a degree program becomes progressively less challenging.

To explore these issues, we asked students to rate the importance of various program features when they began their cohort program, and at the time of the interview or (if they had graduated) during their last semester of classes. Students rated these features and services on a Likert scale from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (extremely important):

- Structural features of the cohort program
  - Financial assistance;
  - The cohort experience itself;

- o Flexible class schedules; and
  - o Convenient location.
- Program services
  - o Academic tutoring;
  - o Computer assistance;
  - o Academic counseling; and
  - o English language assistance.

As indicated in Figure 4, students overwhelmingly viewed the structural features of their programs as very or extremely important. Not surprisingly, as working students in a generally very low-paying occupation, they relied on financial assistance, flexible class schedules, and convenient locations as essential to their participation, and their rating of the importance of these features barely shifted over time. Their perception of the importance of the cohort structure itself actually increased, from 73 percent of students saying they viewed it as very or extremely important when they started the program, to 88 percent feeling this way at the time of the interview. These programs were designed intentionally to build a "learning community" for students, offering personal support and opportunities to deepen one's understanding of the school experience through an ongoing context of discussion and reflection. It appears that students relied on or appreciated the cohort experience more as the programs progressed.

Figure 4: Importance of Cohort Program Structure at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

Category	Not/Not very important	Fairly important	Very/extremely important
Financial Assistance Start of Cohort (N=99)	1	3	96
Financial Assistance Winter 2009 (N=101)	3	3	94
Cohort Experience Start of Cohort (N=101)	18	9	73
Cohort Experience Winter 2009 (N=101)	3	9	88
Flexible Class Schedules Start of Cohort (N=100)	1	5	94
Flexible Class Schedules Winter 2009 (N=101)	2	6	92
Convenient Location Start of Cohort (N=101)	7	6	87
Convenient Location Winter 2009 (N=102)	5	5	90

As indicated in Figure 5, students reported a shift over time in their ratings of the importance of various program services. A substantial portion of students, however, continued to consider all of the services important even after some time in the program.

The greatest shift in perception of the importance of services over the course of the program occurred for academic tutoring and computer assistance. Slightly more than one-half (51 percent) said they had considered academic tutoring to be very or extremely important when they started taking classes, compared to 38 percent at the time of the interview. Most of this change involved a shift to "fairly important," rather than "not very important" or "not important." Looking more closely at individual student responses over time, we found that of the students who reported that academic tutoring was very or extremely important when they started the program, 63 percent felt it continued to be. Ninety percent of the students who said they had viewed academic tutoring as not important at all when they started the program continued to feel that way. Thus, while the overall demand for academic tutoring may decline over time, a subset of students will likely continue to rely on its availability. This pattern was consistent across all cohorts.

Figure 5: Importance of the Cohort Program Services at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs
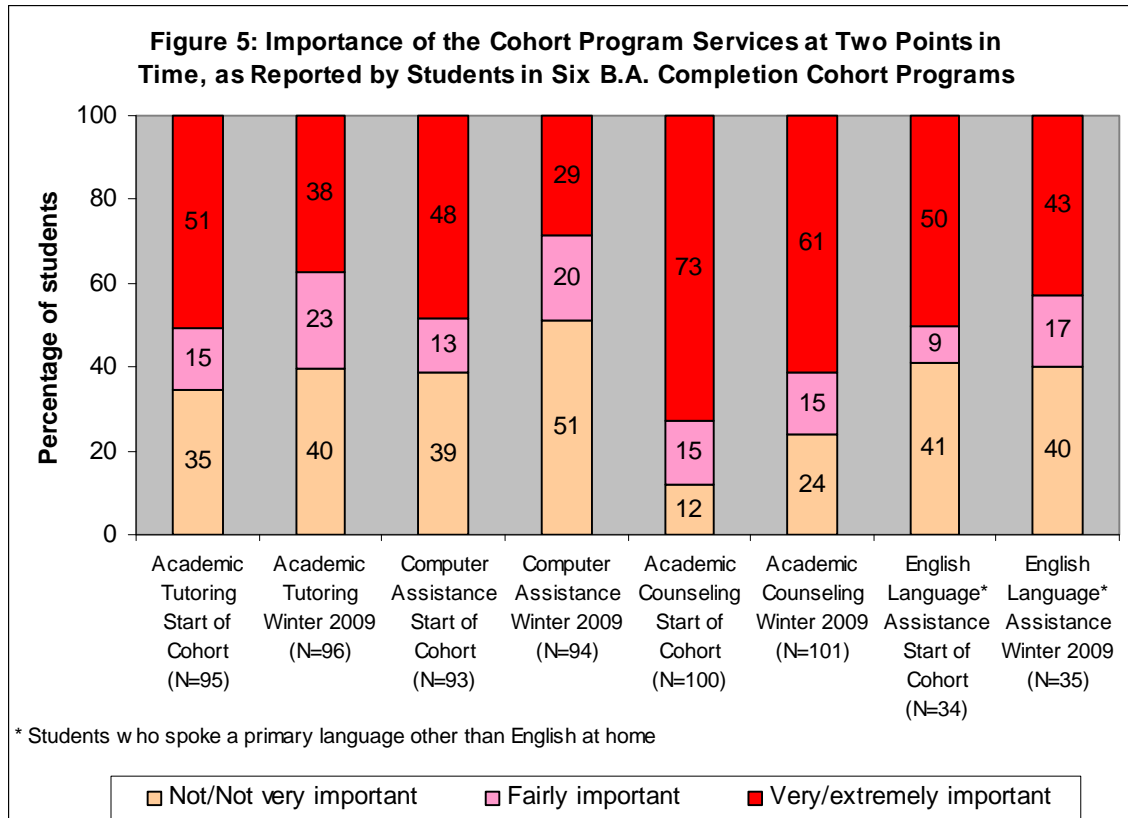
Students also felt that the importance of computer and technological help had shifted over the course of their participation in the cohort programs. Nearly one-half of all students (48 percent) said that they had considered such assistance very or extremely important at the start of the program, compared to only 29 percent at the time of the interview. Slightly more than one-third of students (39 percent) who reported that computer/tech help was extremely or very important at the beginning continued to think so. This finding suggests that computer services, while remaining somewhat necessary over time, are more likely to be considered important at the beginning of the program.

Most students (73 percent) said they had considered academic counseling very or extremely important when they started the program, and 61 percent still did so at the time of the interview. Among that 61 percent of students, most (71 percent) had considered it so at the start of the program. Many students commented that the issues with which they needed assistance had shifted over the course of the program. At the start, their concerns centered on articulation issues, and whether they would receive credit for courses they

had already completed. At the time of the interview, students spoke of relying on counselors to help them navigate any unmet graduate requirements.

As noted earlier, two-fifths of the students in the sample spoke a primary language other than English in their homes. Some of these students relied on the tutorial assistance provided by the cohort program, or by the college or university, in order to complete their coursework in English successfully. Fifty percent of these students said that language assistance was very or extremely important at the beginning of the program; at the time of the interview, 91 percent of these students continued to feel this way. This suggests that, depending on the population of students and their language skills, demand for this support may well continue throughout the duration of a cohort program.

Students' Assessment of Growth in Knowledge and Skills Over Time

During the first year of the study, nearly all students interviewed (96 percent) identified at least one positive impact that their participation in the cohort program had made on their everyday work with children and families. To further understand their assessments of their growth in knowledge and skills over time, we asked whether they had had certain academic skills when they started taking classes in their cohort program, and whether those skills had improved by the time of the interview or (if they had graduated) by their last semester of classes:

- Critical thinking, defined as the ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate what one is learning, to answer a question or reach a conclusion;
- The ability to evaluate the accuracy of research about child development or early childhood education; and
- The ability to apply theory to practice—i.e., to apply what one has learned in class with one's work with children and families.

Most students (81 percent) said that when they started taking classes, they felt they knew how to apply theory to practice; 64 percent felt they had critical thinking skills, and only 40 percent said they knew how to assess early childhood research. At the

time of the interview, all but one or two students reported improvement across all three areas.

To gain further information about students' assessments of what they were learning, we asked them to consider all the classes they had taken to date as part of their B.A. cohort, and to assess how helpful their courses had been in helping them develop abilities in the following areas:

- Establishing a classroom environment:
  - Creating a positive emotional environment for children
  - Creating a positive instructional environment (one that promotes learning) for children; and
  - Developing positive interactions with children
- Teaching skills to children:
  - Language and literacy skills
  - Social skills
  - Math skills
  - Science skills
- Working with diverse groups of children, including:
  - Children with challenging behaviors
  - Children with physical disabilities
  - Children with emotional and/or learning disabilities
  - Children who are dual language learners
  - Children from cultures other than one's own
  - Children from multiple cultural backgrounds in the same classroom
  - Children from multiple linguistic backgrounds in the same classroom
- Working with diverse adults, including:
  - Families from cultures other than one's own
  - Families from a variety of cultural backgrounds in a single classroom or program
  - Families from a variety of linguistic backgrounds in a single classroom or program

- o Co-workers
- Supervision and administration skills (directors only):
    - o Helping staff to improve their instructional practices
    - o Managing and supervising staff.

Interviewers emphasized to students that they were not asking them to discuss particular courses, adding that they recognized that since students entered cohort programs with different levels of skill and knowledge, not all courses would be equally helpful to all students. Below, we report students' perspectives on what they are learning, and how helpful it has been to their work with children and families. We note, however, that in order to understand more fully how completion of a B.A. cohort program contributes to a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom, further investigation is required concerning the content of each cohort program's course of study, as well as classroom observations of students' changing practices over time.

Establishing a Classroom Environment, and Interactions with Children. Overwhelmingly, students found their courses to be very or extremely helpful with respect to creating classroom environments and interacting positively with children, as shown in Figure 6. Only 10 percent or fewer reported that their classes as a whole had not contributed to their skills in these areas. It is not possible to determine whether students in this latter group felt that they already possessed the necessary skills when they began the cohort program, or felt dissatisfied in some way with the program itself. Student responses varied slightly across cohort programs, as shown in the Appendix, but it is not possible to ascertain the extent to which these differences result from different courses of instruction, the quality of instruction, or the students' sense of their own abilities.

Figure 6: Impact of Courses on Classroom Practice, as Reported by Students in Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs
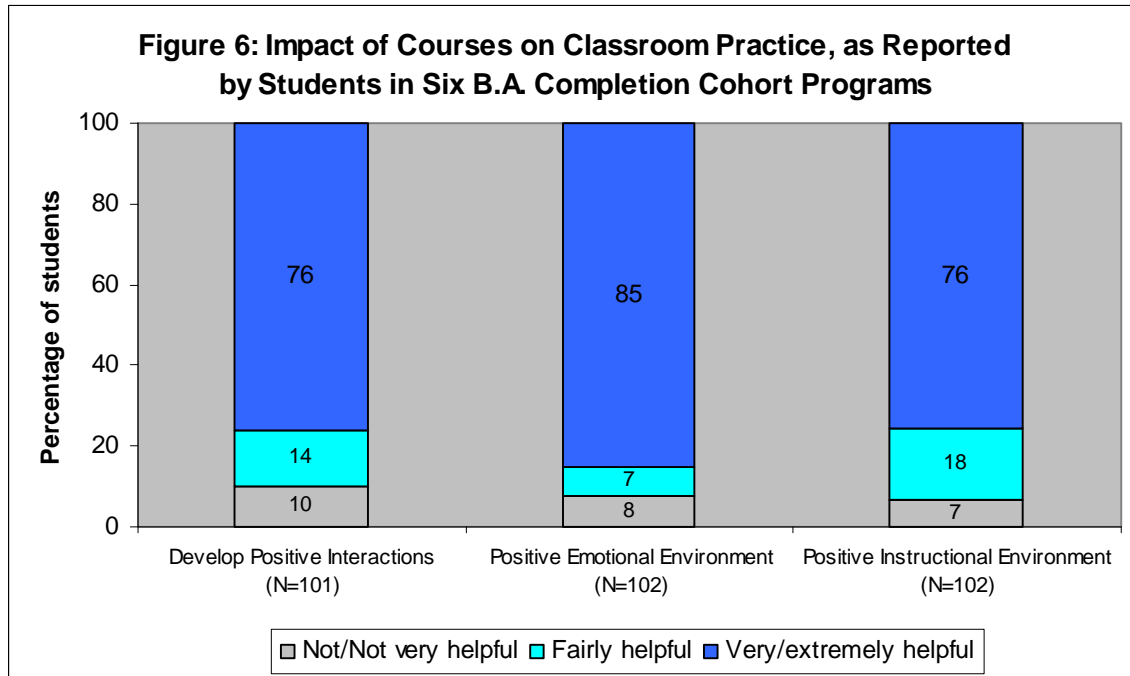
Teaching Skills to Children. As shown in Figure 7, about three-quarters of students reported that their coursework had contributed to their ability to teach children skills related to language and literacy, and social interactions. Although somewhat fewer students reported that their classes had helped them teach math and science skills, the majority found their classes to be very or extremely helpful in this regard. As shown in the Appendix, similar patterns were evident across most of the cohort programs.

Figure 7: Impact of Courses on the Ability to Teach Skills to Children, as Reported by Students in Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs
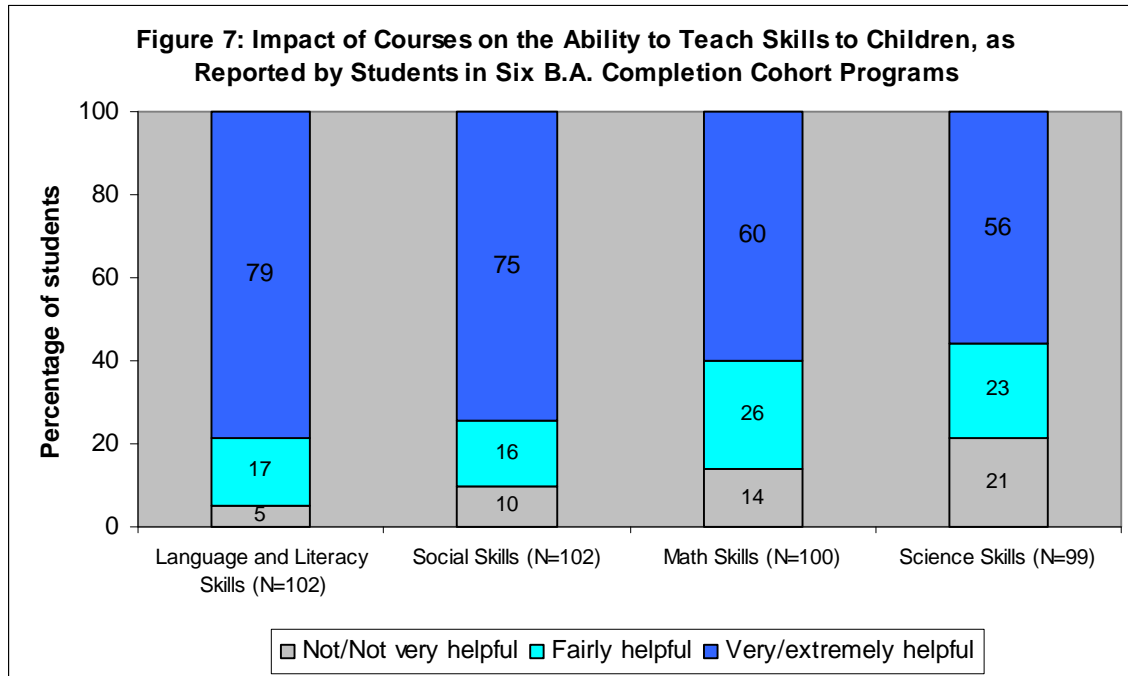
Working with Diverse Children and Adults. California's young children are developmentally, linguistically and culturally diverse, and there is considerable concern about whether teachers are being well prepared to meet the needs of all children. Students were asked to assess the impact of their classes in helping them develop skills for working with children and families with various characteristics, including linguistic and ethnic backgrounds different from the students' own. As shown in Figure 8 and 9, most students found their courses to be very or extremely helpful with respect to working with children and families from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This was particularly the case for students attending San Francisco State University, whose program was designed to focus on issues of culture and language.

Although students reported that their classes had helped them in working with children with special needs, they generally rated their courses as somewhat less helpful in this area, compared to issues of culture and language. Most students also rated their classes as very or extremely helpful in working with families, coworkers or employees.

Figure 8: Impact of Courses on Working with Diverse Groups of Children, as Reported by Students in Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

	English Language Learners (N=98)	Challenging Behaviors (N=102)	Physical Disabilities (N=100)	Emotional Disabilities (N=102)	Different Cultures from Own (N=102)	Multiple Cultures Same Classroom (N=101)	Multiple Languages Same Classroom (N=99)
Very/extremely helpful	72	69	59	67	75	73	67
Fairly helpful	16	21	25	24	15	17	19
Not/Not very helpful	12	11	16	10	11	10	14

Percentage of students

Legend: ☐ Not/Not very helpful ☐ Fairly helpful ■ Very/extremely helpful
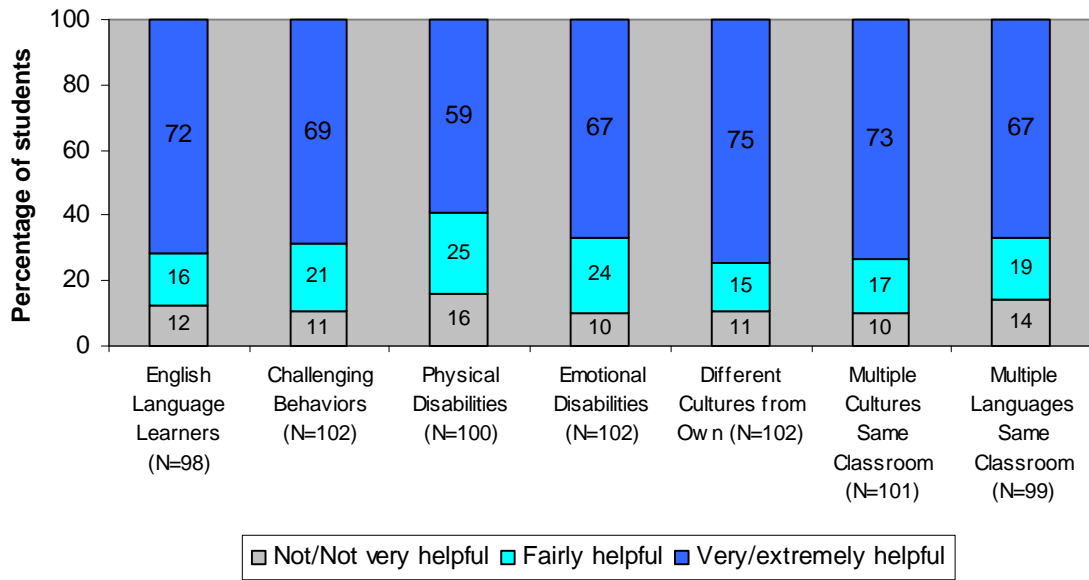
Figure 9: Impact of Courses on Working with Families and Staff, as Reported by Students in Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

	Families from Different Cultures from Own (N=102)	Families from Multiple Cultures (N=101)	Families from Multiple Linguistic Backgrounds (N=95)	Co-Workers (N=93)	Directors Only: Improve Instructional Practice of Staff (N=39)	Directors Only: Manage and Supervise Staff (N=37)
Very/extremely helpful	74	70	63	63	72	62
Fairly helpful	14	19	20	15	18	16
Not/Not very helpful	13	11	17	22	10	22

Percentage of students

Legend: ☐ Not/Not very helpful ☐ Fairly helpful ■ Very/extremely helpful
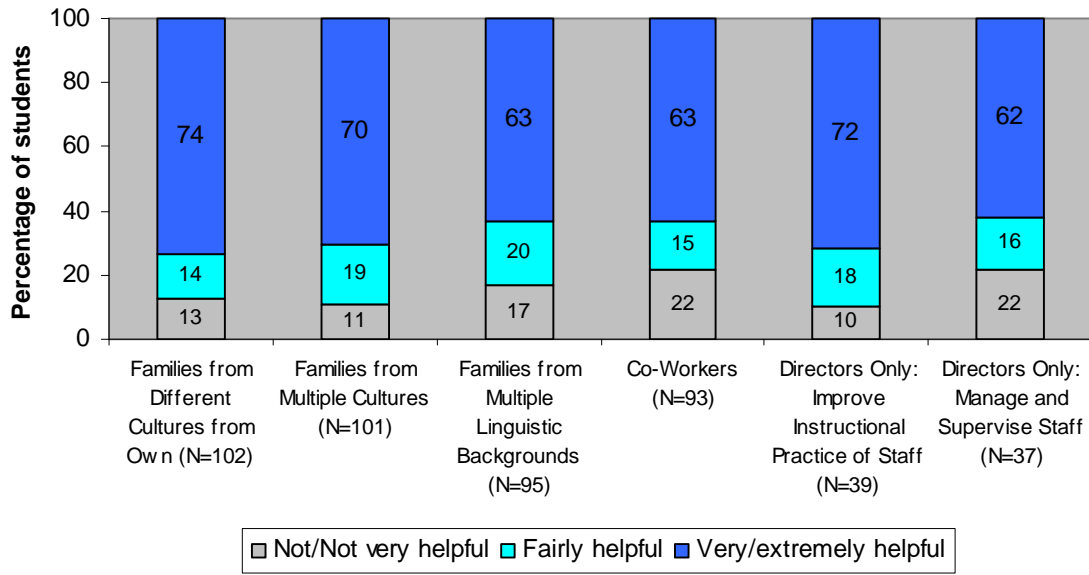
Students' Assessment of the Practicum Experience

It is generally recognized that field-based or clinical opportunities are an essential component of effective teacher preparation. While most teacher education programs require students to participate in a practicum, we know little about what constitutes the optimal experience. What length and duration of field experience is appropriate for students at different stages of their careers? What is appropriate supervision, and what preparation and skills are necessary for good supervisors and instructors of student teachers? And beyond the field experience, what are the characteristics of ongoing coaching and mentoring that best support student learning?

Those who design teacher preparation programs for adults already employed as teachers—often with years of experience—face added challenges in designing a practicum. How can such a program component best account for and build upon, rather than duplicate, the experience that working teachers already bring to the classroom situation? What are the pros and cons of students completing a practicum in their own classrooms, in a different classroom within their workplace, or at a different workplace? What are the logistical issues posed by each option? In this report, we begin a preliminary exploration of these questions.

By the time of the Winter 2009 interviews, 55 percent of students had completed their practicum, 15 percent were currently participating in one, and 30 percent had not yet done so. (See Table 4.) All students at CSU-EB and SFSU, and all but one student at the University of La Verne, had completed their practicum. Forty-one percent of Antioch University students and one Mills College student had done so. At San Jose State University, no students had yet begun the practicum.

Table 4: Student Practicum Experiences

Status of Practicum	
Completed the practicum	55%
Currently taking the practicum	15%
Have not taken the practicum yet	30%
TOTAL N=104	**100%**
Practicum Sites for Teachers	
In one's own classroom	61%
In one's own workplace, in a different classroom	19%
At another workplace	28%
N=43 (Does not total 100%; students might have more than one practicum site.)	
Practicum Sites for Directors	
In one's own workplace	58%
In another workplace	42%
TOTAL (N=12)	**100%**
Guidance and Supervision	
Faculty from B.A. program	95%
Staff from practicum site	84%
Coach/Mentor	27%
N=56 (Does not total 100%; students might have more than one practicum supervisor.)	

Practicum Sites. We were interested in the location of students' practicum experience; as shown in Table 4, most teachers who had completed their practicum had done so at their own workplaces, in their own classrooms. This varied by cohort, however. None of the La Verne teachers completed the practicum in their own classroom, compared to 100 percent of Antioch teachers, 90 percent of the CSU-East Bay teachers and 60 percent of the SFSU teachers. The cohort programs also include some students who work as directors or administrators in the early childhood field. Although administrative staff who had completed their practicum accounted for only a small number of students across all programs (N=12), more than one-half (58 percent) of these

students completed their practicum at their work site, and the rest completed it at another site.

Although not all programs consider student requests when determining the location or structure of the practicum, this decision can be of great importance to nontraditional students already working in the field. We asked students whether they felt their practicum site had been a good match for them, whether they preferred a site other than their own workplace, and whether participating in a practicum had created any conflicts with work or family. Students were asked to rate a series of statements about the practicum on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

Most students whose practicum had been at another workplace had positive views of the site and experience. Seventy-seven percent of these students somewhat or strongly agreed that their practicum site had been a good match for them, and 63 percent said they preferred doing their practicum off-site. This was consistent across all cohorts except for the University of La Verne, where 40 percent of students said they somewhat or strongly disagreed that their practicum had been a good match.

Among students whose practicum experience had been off-site, however, there was a range of opinions about the impact of the practicum on their ability to balance the demands of work, family and school. Sixty-five percent of these students somewhat or strongly agreed that the practicum had created scheduling conflicts with work that they had not had when they were just taking classes, and 59 percent somewhat or strongly agreed that participating in the practicum had made it more difficult to balance school and family life than just taking classes. Twenty-nine percent of these students reported losing some income from their child care jobs while participating in the practicum.

Students whose practicum had been in their own classrooms reported somewhat different issues. We asked these students whether—assuming there would be no scheduling conflicts with work of family—they would have preferred to do a practicum somewhere else, and 48 percent somewhat or strongly agreed.

For students whose practicum had been at a different classroom within their own workplace, we asked whether—assuming there would be no scheduling conflicts with work or family—they would have preferred a practicum setting in a different workplace, and 55 percent somewhat or strongly agreed.

Supervision and Guidance. We asked students who had completed their practicum to tell us about the supervision and guidance they had received. Almost all students (95 percent) identified a faculty member or instructor from the B.A. program who had filled this role. Many students (84 percent) also reported that a teacher, director or other staff member from the practicum site supervised them, although this varied by cohort. While all of the University of La Verne students, and 92 percent of SFSU students, identified a teacher, director, or other staff member from the practicum site as the provider of supervision and guidance, only 46 percent of CSU-EB students did so. Students in that cohort were more likely to identify a mentor or coach as their practicum supervisor, reflecting an intentional design component of CSU-EB cohort programs.

We were interested in whether students' opinions about their practicum experience would differ according to what type of person had provided them with supervision and guidance. Ninety-one percent of students supervised by a B.A. program faculty member or instructor, 87 percent of those supervised by staff from the practicum site, and 100 percent of those supervised by a coach or mentor, somewhat or strongly agreed that they had received the guidance they needed. Similarly, 94 percent of students supervised by a B.A. program faculty member or instructor, 85 percent of those supervised by staff from the practicum site, and 100 percent of those supervised by a coach or mentor, somewhat or strongly agreed that they had had enough opportunities to reflect upon the practicum experience with their supervisor.

Student Opinions about the Effectiveness of the Practicum. We also presented students with a series of statements about how well the practicum had supported their learning and influenced their teaching practices, asking them to rate each statement from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The first of these statements was, "The practicum helped me to develop the knowledge and/or skills I learned in classes." Ninety-three percent of students somewhat or strongly agreed with this statement, a finding that was consistent across cohorts.

We next asked them to respond to the following statements about the effect of the practicum on their job:

- As a result of my practicum, I changed some of the ways I work with children at my job.
- Overall, my practicum has helped me do a better job at my workplace.

Ninety-one percent of students somewhat or strongly agreed with the first statement, but this varied somewhat by cohort. While almost all students at Antioch University, CSU-EB and SFSU somewhat or strongly agreed with this statement, only 60 percent of University of La Verne students did so.

Ninety-three percent of students reported that the practicum had helped them do a better job at their workplace, but this also varied slightly by cohort. While all Antioch, CSU-EB, and SFSU students somewhat or strongly agreed with this statement, only 60 percent of University of La Verne students did so.

Finally, we asked students to rate their agreement or disagreement with the following statement: "Overall, I had enough opportunities to reflect upon my practicum experience with my cohort." Ninety-five percent of students somewhat or strongly agreed.

Students' Assessment of Support for Ongoing Learning and Professional Development at Their Workplaces

The ability of teachers to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained in a higher education program depends largely on whether or not they have opportunities and support for ongoing learning and growth in the workplace. Certain features of the work environment can either support or hinder them. We asked students a series of questions about their workplaces to ascertain whether they believed they were receiving support in the workplace for their professional development and learning. Using a Likert scale, we asked students to rate whether various workplace supports were available to them all the time, some of the time (more often than not), once in a while, or none of the time. These included: support from a supervisor; time for preparation and reflection; financial assistance for ongoing professional development; flexible work schedules; and paid time off for school-related needs. Because these supports are more often a result of workplace polices implemented in child care centers or schools, rather than in home-based ECE programs, we asked these questions only of students working in center-based settings.

The Educational Environment of the Workplace. Fifty-nine percent of students reported that they received help from their supervisor "all of the time" to practice what they were learning in school, and almost one-quarter said they received such help some of the time or more often than not. (See Figure 10.) Most students also reported that they received, at least some of the time, paid time to prepare for their classroom activities with children and/or had a scheduled time to talk with co-workers about strategies for improving children's learning. In addition, most students received financial assistance, either all of the time (36 percent) or at least some of the time (47 percent), to attend workshops and conferences.

Figure 10: The Educational Environment at Students' Workplaces, as Reported by Students in Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

Category	All the Time	Some of the time/Once in a while	Never
Financial assistance for workshops (N=90)	36	47	18
Supervisor helps with homework (N=88)	25	30	46
Supervisor helps implement what learned in class (N=88)	59	24	17
Paid time to prepare classes for children (N=87)	53	24	23
Scheduled time to talk with co-workers about the children (N=89)	54	33	14

Percentage of students (y-axis: 0 to 100)

Legend: □ All the Time ■ Some of the time/Once in a while ■ Never

Assistance with Attending School. Workplace policies that support teachers' efforts to return to school, complete their classes, and earn degrees can benefit both the students and the workplace. We asked students to tell us how often they received workplace assistance with attending school. One-half of students reported being able "all of the time" to use sick, vacation and/or personal days for school-related activities such as studying or attending classes, and 27 percent said they had this option more often than not or at least once in a while. (See Figure 11.) Many students also reported having flexible schedules that allowed them, for example, to vary their work hours in order to attend classes; 40 percent said they had a flexible schedule all of the time, and 38 percent did so some of the time or once in a while.

Figure 11: Workplace Assistance for Attending School, as Reported by Students in Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs
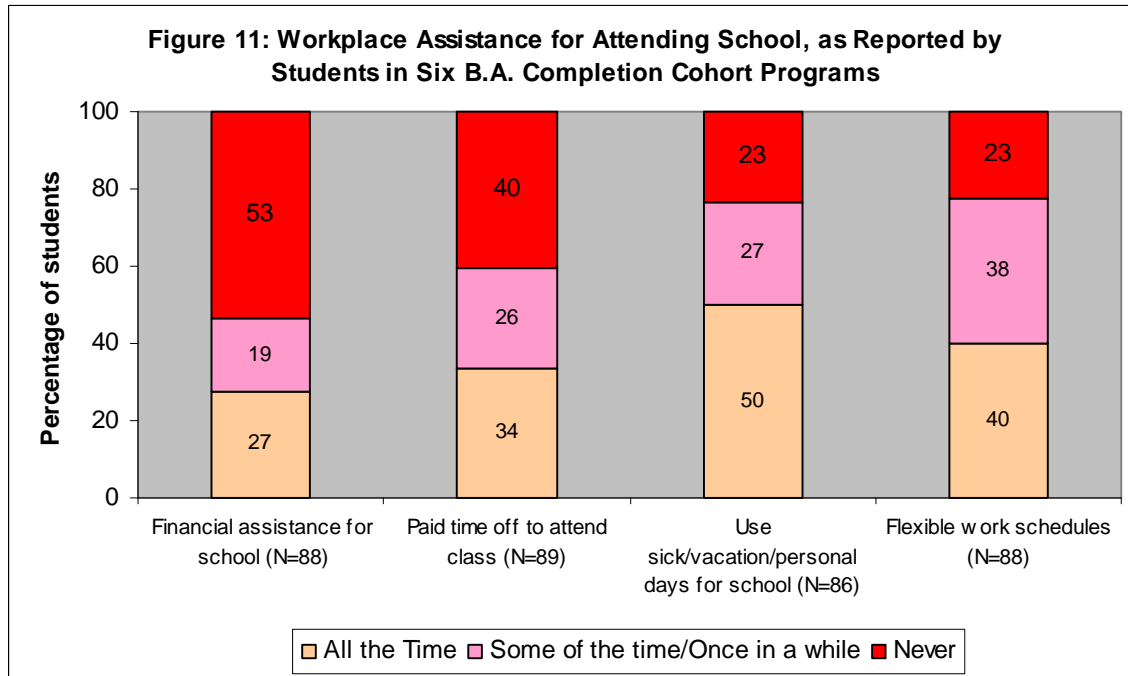
A majority of students also reported having paid time off to attend classes at least some of the time. However, less than one-half of students reported receiving financial assistance from their employer at least some of the time for books, other class materials, or tuition. Sixty percent of students received paid time off to attend classes. This varied by cohort. (See Appendix.)

There were some differences in students' reports of the learning environment of their workplaces, correlated with the types of centers at which they worked. Sixty-one percent of students employed at Head Start centers reported receiving paid time off to attend classes all of the time, compared with 14 percent of students employed by State Preschools or other centers contracted with the California Department of Education (CDE), most of whom received no such paid time (χ^2 (4) = 17.30, p < .01). This finding is likely related to the 2007 Head Start Reauthorization's mandate for an increase in the number of B.A.-level Head Start teachers. By contrast, one-third of students working at privately funded centers were able to receive such paid time off "all of the time." Students employed at State Preschools or centers with CDE contracts were also less

likely than Head Start teachers to receive financial assistance from their employer for books, other class materials, or tuition (χ^2 (4) = 28.78, p < .001).

Most students employed by privately funded programs (81 percent) received paid time to prepare for their classroom activities with children "all of the time," compared with 43 percent of students who worked at Head Start centers and 50 percent of students employed by centers contracted by CDE (χ^2 (4) = 10.07, p < .05). One-third of students employed by CDE-contracted centers did not receive any paid preparation time; the remainder received such paid time "some of the time".

Students' Perceptions of the Workplace Climate. We asked students for their perceptions regarding issues of funding, workload, staff stability and turnover, and collaboration at their workplaces. Research suggests that examining the staff learning environment in an early care and education program requires a consideration of contextual issues related to the center as a whole and the overall health of the organization. The level of staff turnover, for example, impacts the overall educational climate of a program as well as its ability to improve and sustain quality (Whitebook & Sakai, 2004). Common stressors, such as unstable funding and isolation, may impede an agency's effectiveness in meeting its mission to provide quality services for children (Reed, Lally, & Quiett, 2008).

Students were presented with statements about the workplace, and asked whether they strongly agreed, somewhat agreed, somewhat disagreed, or strongly disagreed with each statement. We were interested in their perceptions of whether their workplaces were well funded, and of the impact of funding on staff members' ability to do their jobs well. Fifty-six percent of students somewhat or strongly agreed that adequate funding was a problem at their centers. Of these students, 54 percent somewhat or strongly agreed that inadequate funding affected the ability of staff to do their jobs well.

We also asked students about staff turnover and staffing changes, any feelings of being overworked, and opportunities for collaboration both at the center level and for individual staff members to collaborate with one another.

Thirty-nine percent of students strongly or somewhat agreed that staff changes at their centers made it difficult for them to do their jobs well. Students employed at Head Start centers (61 percent) were more likely to somewhat or strongly agree that staffing changes presented such a difficulty, compared with students employed at CDE contracted (33 percent) or privately funded programs (25 percent; χ^2 (2) = 6.34, $p < .05$).

Sixty-seven percent of students somewhat or strongly agreed that staff at their centers often felt overworked with heavy job responsibilities. Those employed at Head Start centers (77 percent) and CDE-contracted centers (81 percent) were more likely to report that they somewhat or strongly agreed about feeling overworked, compared with 38 percent of students employed at privately funded centers (χ^2 (2) = 10.89, $p < .01$).

On a more positive note, however, the vast majority of students felt that individual teachers, and their centers as a whole, had opportunities to collaborate. Eighty-eight percent of students strongly or somewhat agreed that their center collaborated with other organizations in the community serving the families and children they cared for, and 88 percent of students strongly or somewhat agreed that they had the opportunities they needed to collaborate with other staff at their centers. This varied to some degree, however, by type of center. One-quarter of students employed at privately funded centers somewhat or strongly disagreed that their center collaborated with other organizations in the community, compared to only 19 percent of students employed at CDE-contracted centers, and no students working at Head Start centers (χ^2 (2) = 5.91, $p = .05$).

Students' Reports on Professional Life After Graduation

One of the goals of the *Learning Together* study is to better understand the career trajectories, and the professional and educational aspirations, of cohort participants after they have completed a B.A. degree. Because some of the students had graduated as of

March 2009, we began exploring these issues in the Winter 2009 student interview, and will investigate them in much more depth in future years as more students graduate.

As of March 2009, 20 of the 102 students we interviewed (20 percent) reported that they had graduated from their cohort programs. These graduates included one student at Antioch University, one at Mills College, 13 at San Francisco State University, and five at the University of La Verne. (See Table 1.) Because these sample sizes are so small, however, we do not report the following findings by individual cohort programs.

We asked the graduates closed-ended questions about the impact of earning a B.A. degree on their early care and education careers in terms of:

- changes in place of employment, job title, or responsibilities, and/or compensation and benefits;
- ongoing contact with other members of their cohort; and
- participation in ECE-related professional activities.

We then asked the graduates open-ended questions about additional education or training that would be helpful to them at their jobs or for meeting their career goals.

Impact of a B.A. Degree on Students' Careers. Of the twenty graduates, two reported moving to a new place of employment after receiving their B.A., 17 reported staying at the same workplace, and one did not respond to this question.

Both of the graduates who reported having moved to a new workplace were still working with young children, and had taken jobs with greater levels of responsibility; one had transitioned from assistant teacher to teacher, and the other had moved from teacher to site supervisor. One reported that her salary and benefits had not changed, and the other did not answer this question.

Of the 17 graduates who reported staying at the same workplace, only one had changed her job title, 15 had remained in the same job, and one did not respond to this

question. The graduate who had changed her job title transitioned from assistant teacher to lead teacher; she had also received a salary increase and improvements to her benefits package. For the remaining 15 graduates who reported staying at the same workplace in the same job, five reported salary increases, and nine did not. One of the graduates who reported a salary increase also reported an improvement in her benefits package. One of these graduates did not respond to the salary and benefits question.

Maintaining a Relationship with the Cohort. As discussed earlier, students' perception of the importance of the cohort design increased over time, with 88 percent of the students saying that the cohort was very or extremely important to them—either at the time of the interview or, for graduates, during their last semester or quarter. We were interested to know whether cohort relationships continued after graduation. Almost all of the graduates (18) responded that they had stayed in contact with at least one member of the cohort; of these, 17 reported socializing with fellow cohort members, 13 reported engaging with them around work-related issues, and 12 reported engaging with them around family and personal issues.

Participation in ECE-Related Activities. We were also interested in indicators of the graduates' involvement in and commitment to the ECE field, such as participation in ECE-related meetings and events outside of their classroom or workplace.

Almost all the graduates (90 percent) reported involvement in ECE-related meetings or events. The two most common activities (12 graduates) were participation in a local compensation and retention program (e.g., CARES or STARS) and attendance at local or state First 5 Commission meetings or events (12 graduates), followed by participation in an NAEYC (or affiliate) meeting or event (9 graduates).

Additional Education and Training. Finally, we asked students about any additional education or training that would be helpful to them at their jobs or for meeting their career goals. Of the 19 graduates who responded to this question, 14 responded that additional formal, credit-bearing education, primarily an M.A. degree, would be helpful. Some mentioned a specific focus for an M.A. degree, such as social work, bilingual education, K-12 education, early childhood education, or special education.

Some students mentioned an interest in further training and education in order to improve in such areas as English-speaking skills, academic writing and reading, and computer literacy. Others mentioned such professional skills as administration; advocacy and public policy; teaching music, science or literacy to children; working with families on issues related to literacy or discipline; and working with children with challenging behaviors.

Part II: Institutions of Higher Education
Study Design

For Year 2, one of the four counties funding the Learning Together study requested an in-depth examination of the participating institutions of higher education in their county. (For Year 1 of this study, as described in our July 2008 report, two others of the four counties had requested such an examination, and 13 interviews were conducted [Whitebook, Sakai, Kipnis, Almaraz, Suarez, & Bellm, 2008]).

Two institutions comprised our interview sample in Year 2: a California State University and a private, nonprofit college. The local funding agency identified key players at these institutions as interview subjects, and in the course of arranging the interviews, the research team identified two additional players. We interviewed a total of 11 subjects, five from each institution, and one from the local community foundation overseeing scholarships for students. One subject we approached for an interview declined our request, and another did not respond to the request.

We sought to interview personnel representing a variety of roles in the B.A. cohort program in each institution, such as student recruitment, program coordination, instruction, and administration. To protect their confidentiality, we identify interviewees by their program roles, not by their names or the names of their institutions, whenever they are quoted in this report. Specifically, the 11 subjects represented the following job roles:

- Four faculty members (three full-time, one adjunct)
- Two deans
- One department chair
- One program coordinator
- One program administrator
- One faculty advisor (not an instructor)
- One scholarship coordinator (from local community foundation).

The study team developed a survey protocol in consultation with the cohort program funders, focusing on the following areas of investigation: interviewees' own motivation and level of involvement in the program; program development and operations; institutional capacity (including prior involvement in early education, available expertise among existing faculty, and prior experience with working adult students), community collaboration and resources, the relationship between the institution and the funding agency, institutional commitment, and program sustainability. For Year 2, we also posed a new question: "What is the ideal student for a B.A. completion cohort program for adults working in early care and education?" The protocol was approved by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of California at Berkeley.

Of the 11 interviews, six were conducted jointly by two of the CSCCE researchers who developed the protocol, and five were conducted by one researcher. Six interviews were conducted in person, and five by telephone, at the request of the subjects. At the start of the interview, participants were asked whether the interview could be recorded, and all agreed. The interview recordings were transcribed by Ubiqus, Inc., and then coded and analyzed by the research team to identify common themes across job roles and institutions.

Our report is not intended to be representative of the variety of institutions that have initiated B.A. completion programs for the ECE field, but rather presents an in-depth look at two distinct institutions engaged in such endeavors, and a comparison with our findings from the three other institutions examined in Year 1.

Findings

We found a striking level of agreement, and commonality of experience, between our Year 1 and Year 2 interview subjects about the strengths, accomplishments and challenges of B.A. completion cohort programs for working adults in ECE, even though we spoke this year with representatives of different institutions.

Program Development and Operations

 External Financial and Community Support. Our Year 2 interviewees repeatedly sounded the themes raised by the institutional representatives with whom we spoke in Year 1: the colleges and universities definitely needed external financial support in order to pilot or launch a B.A. completion cohort program in ECE—although the need varied by type of institution—and they especially appreciated and valued the support received from their local First 5 commission.

 They also stressed that such financial support, while necessary, was not sufficient for a cohort program's success—and raised the issues of organizational "fit" and leadership that are discussed below. We heard, too, that funders need to have a vision of what they want, and must be able to articulate this to the grantees, holding the institutions to that vision. Funders need to be discriminating in advance about which institutions are likely to succeed at piloting a B.A. cohort program, and then work with them to implement the vision.

 Further, we heard that a variety of community stakeholders, not just local funders, were key. In addition to First 5, local community college representatives played a large role in helping CSU shape its cohort program, strongly arguing for it as something that was needed in order to build on their A.A.-level work. They were also deeply familiar with the needs and challenges of working adults returning to school, and they brought to the planning effort a vision of what a cohort program could be. Clearly, however, not all four-year institutions are equally willing or able to respond to such a vision, but our interviewees reported that relationships between the community college and CSU staff were essential to their success, and grew into what one interviewee called "a true collaboration."

 Finally, from our interviews, we also saw a promising role for community foundations in coordinating cohort program scholarships. This was a particularly good service role for a foundation already interested in ECE issues, even if it had not been investing in teacher education *per se.* In this county, the community foundation screened

financial aid applications, decided which students would receive aid, and sent the funds to the institutions, so that the process was seamless for the students—and it relied on the local college and university to do the work of helping students access other sources of financial aid. Our foundation interviewee estimated a several-hour annual commitment for the selection committee to read and decide on the applications, and about eight to ten hours per month of foundation staff time to oversee the scholarship fund once it was up and running.

Organizational Congruence. In both years, our interviewees have emphasized the critical importance of a good fit between the institution's own philosophy of education, and a B.A. cohort program's key objectives of community involvement and a focus on working adults. Such a "good fit" is a matter of both professional and personal values.

In Year 2, an administrator spoke to us of the need for "some internal commitment in addition to external resources," and a faculty member recalled the value of having worked at a community college, gaining knowledge about and commitment to meeting the needs of the transfer student population. In the private institution where interviewees reported that there was not a good fit with the cohort program model, a faculty member noted that it was hard "to make it work both for the college and the students. While it fit with part of our commitment to education, the part-time student aspect of it, and the level of funding, didn't work." An administrator noted more bluntly, "The model itself doesn't work here. Everybody seems comfortable with it ending."

The type of institution itself also appears to matter. We heard from a faculty member that a "teaching" institution, for example, is a more likely candidate for a good fit with the cohort model than one with more of an orientation toward research; so is an institution that sees a commitment to serving nontraditional students as part of its ongoing mission—or, as a CSU representative put it, "degree completion oriented for returning adult leaders."[1]

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[1] More recently, the cohort experience has inspired this CSU to develop a new M.A. program, which it intends to articulate with the B.A. program.

CSU interviewees also talked about their willingness to be experimental, because they did not have to spend time and resources recruiting more students; having a large department of over 300 students allowed them to retain some of their relatively small classes, and to be open to having some of the courses taught by another department. This experience reiterated the principle that there needs to be a "critical mass" to make undertaking such a new effort worthwhile for an institution, although that number might vary by institution and department size.

The private institution, by contrast, had expected a larger influx of students in anticipation of the passage of Proposition 82, which would have brought major public resources to higher education programs for preparing B.A.-level preschool teachers. When the proposition failed, and First 5 chose to help fund the effort anyway, student demand was lower than expected—only serving to heighten the fact that the institution didn't have the readiness to take on such a new venture very easily.

The dean of the private college talked further about ways in which the cohort model didn't mesh well with the institution:

> We believe it is important to educate at a high level of quality, but financially it is very hard to do that. The funders gave us $50,000 a year, but we need $120,000 a year to get through. We offered discount tuition, and on a one-time basis, we let students attend part-time. But anything that doesn't fit into the structure of the broader institution creates a problem for running the program. The funder wanted us to offer classes off-site, but we don't do that. It creates a legal situation. Each one of those things has to be figured out on a one-by-one basis—but we knew we weren't going to be doing this program for 20 years, and it wasn't worth it to be doing it just once. The amount of scholarship money wasn't worth the many hours of my time.

Another difficult "fit" at the private institution was its traditional practice of requiring all education students to participate in the campus lab school three mornings a week—an approach that was basically unworkable for almost all the cohort students, since they held ECE jobs at other workplaces during the day. Yet the college was strongly resistant to modifying the requirement; as one faculty member told us, "it's the

centerpiece of our program; it changes and affects how students teach." After a stalemate of sorts, the college worked out a way for faculty to visit students in their own workplaces during the course of the practicum semester, but this difficulty served as another signal that the working-adult cohort model did not fit well with the college's ongoing mission.

Institutional Leadership. In both years, we heard repeatedly of the importance of "buy-in" to the cohort program from key figures in leadership, and from people in a variety of roles at the institution. This year, one department chair jokingly called herself the "fix-it girl" for problems that arose, helping with "opening doors" and articulating the need for the program to resistant faculty members. A dean spoke of the role of helping staff and faculty "get through curriculum changes." And as an administrator noted, "Within the department, there is a need for shared ownership and shared responsibility. This became clear when one critical person went on sabbatical."

Institutional Capacity

Relevant Past Experience. As in Year 1, we heard from our subjects that not only an interest in serving a working adult student population, but also an institutional track record of doing so, matters a great deal. In this particular county, CSU had the advantages of familiarity with the needs of nontraditional students (e.g., issues of scheduling and location), a diverse faculty, experience with online instruction, and a variety of community connections, including relationships with area community colleges.

Academic Expertise. In Year 1 and Year 2, interviewees discussed a similar range of issues about their institutions' own academic expertise, as it related to delivering a B.A. completion program for working adults: different degree options, and which would be best applicable to the cohort students' needs; the institution's relative focus on developmental theory or on applied practice; its history of offering ECE teacher preparation; the use (or not) of adjunct faculty; and program accreditation.

This year, one of the two institutions we studied (the CSU campus) combined the two approaches we had seen in Year 1 of focusing either on Education or on Human or Child Development; it relied on both departments, resulting in a newly developed "hybrid" effort, a Human Development major with an Education/ECE minor. The other, smaller private institution's Education department had academic expertise both in Child Development and in applied work.

The faculty issue was somewhat problematic at both institutions. The CSU we studied has three full-time Human Development faculty members who teach the birth-to-five development classes; while they have some research background in this area, however, they are not early childhood specialists *per se*. Several respondents mentioned that they would like to have a dedicated ECE person in the Human Development department, and more faculty members in Education, but that this was unlikely to happen for many years because of the state budget crisis. A CSU dean noted, "Without the three faculty members we had, we would have had no expertise or interest, and we'd have a very hollow program." While Human Development did not use adjunct faculty, the Education Department did; M.A.-level instructors with practical ECE experience taught in this part of the program. The private institution had no dedicated, full-time faculty members focused solely on ECE, and did not have a large enough faculty to carry out the program without bringing in adjuncts; we heard from respondents that faculty felt "spread thin."

The CSU program we studied formerly offered a degree in Early Childhood Education, but had not done much in this area since the retirement of a key faculty member and California's elimination of the Early Childhood Education credential in the 1970s (Bellm, Whitebook, Cohen, & Stevenson, 2004). Like other institutions studied last year, CSU called upon retired faculty members for advice in revamping its program to suit a working-adult cohort. While the Human Development Department was strong in child development theory, it saw the need to add a more specific ECE focus, as well as the need to collaborate with the Education Department to add an "applied" focus to its more theoretical orientation.

Lessons Learned: Key Elements of Student Success

The Cohort Experience. In both Year 1 and Year 2, we heard resoundingly from our interview subjects that the cohort structure and experience itself was critical to the students' success. As a student advisor said, "Students need to know they are not alone; they bring each other along." Asked why she thought the students were successful, a CSU faculty member responded, "The number one thing is the cohort. It's our preferred model of operating. We believe in the spirit of collaboration. It's the support that the students can offer one another. We've had very good successes, and we won't abandon the model." A department chair added, "What I see with cohorts that you don't see with other students who drift on and off this campus, or are sitting at a screen at home, is that they've got a community."

Financial Assistance. Interviewees this year, as in Year 1, saw substantial financial aid as essential for this working student population. Noting the generally low compensation that teachers earn in the ECE field, one subject said that the students pursuing these programs weren't at a "job level" that allowed them to afford it on their own. Likewise, the scholarship coordinator said, "We want to reduce the financial burden that goes with education, because they aren't particularly high earners. We don't want them to have expenses after graduation, and we don't want them worrying about paying bills." Our subjects also emphasized the importance of counseling and advising services, so that students know how to access all forms of financial aid, not just what the local funder and/or the institution can provide.

Flexible Scheduling and Location. Interview subjects in both years discussed issues of convenient location (such as off-campus sites) and nontraditional scheduling when serving working adult students. We heard in Year 2 that there can be various forms of accessibility, too, including a kind of "hybrid model" of well-timed classes, face-to-face instruction (especially early on in the program), followed by introducing the option of some online instruction.

Still, we heard repeatedly that a significant amount of on-campus contact is important, in order for students to be a part of the community. As a student advisor said, "Accessibility has to be balanced with the campus experience, and the sense of belonging, particularly for people who are the first generation in their families to complete a degree. It's such a huge feeling of accomplishment to be part of the campus community."

We also heard about various scheduling-related issues. Late afternoon classes, for example, were often difficult for working students to get to. The private college ran out of classrooms in the evening, because spaces had already been booked for their K-12 credential and Educational Leadership programs. Online instruction was of some help in keeping students, especially those with family responsibilities, from having to come to campus too often. Further, some subjects said it was important to keep a full range of classes available in the summer so that students could keep making progress. As one faculty member said, "These students are plugging along, and it's important that they don't have a quarter when there are no classes for them to take in our department, and the next thing they need won't be offered for six months."

Academic Readiness. In Year 1 and Year 2, our interviewees raised very similar issues of students' academic readiness, especially the need for math and writing support; see the discussion below, related to this year's added interview question, "What is the ideal student for a BA completion cohort program for adults working in early childhood?**"**

Academic Advising and Support. Consistent themes in Year 1 and Year 2 interviews were the needs for cohort program staff to help students with logistical barriers, offer support and motivation, and help them see their own professional expertise. Whether it comes from a dedicated faculty member or someone in an enhanced counseling position, a department chair said, "Intensive advising is essential to access. They can't just stand in line with everybody else. They are getting the special help that I wish all students had." A faculty member said she wanted students to know, "This is your

university. We're here for you. We try to do that kind of nurturing, and our department is lucky we can."

Together, the interviewees provided a detailed list of what is involved in this advising role: pointing students to resources they might need; finding out who else on campus knows how to support this population and help solve their problems; arranging cohort meetings; getting students on track for a set schedule of classes; having access to computer records and institutional knowledge; being able to recruit, motivate and empower students; listening to students and showing them that they are being heard; "opening doors" and serving as a liaison with faculty; and offering career advice. As one faculty advisor described it,

> The cohort students get a lot of TLC here. If you're a regular student, you may have to make an appointment in the university advisement center, which could take two months, or else you have to drop in, maybe sign up at 9:00, and have a 20-minute appointment an hour or two later. But in this program, if you have a problem, the coordinator will answer your questions, or I will. There aren't any of those mistakes where a student might be two quarters away from graduation and then discover there are three extra classes they should have taken at the community college. It's really a loophole in the system that regular students don't get more advising.

Some interview subjects also raised the issue of access to psychological counseling. A faculty member noted that cases of students dropping out were not always related to an inability to handle the coursework; there could be depression, substance abuse, family stresses including deaths of loved ones, or stress at work. While the cohort members discussed issues of stress as a group, she added that students often needed more individualized counseling for personal problems—but that "while we can require tutoring, we can't, of course, require counseling."

Finally, we also heard about the importance of advisors not only helping individual students, but also getting institutions to respond to student needs. As one advisor said,

> Students need one person to help them navigate the system. When they're not on campus during the day, they still need all the things that every student does, but they're not here to figure out how to access them. It can be so challenging even to

figure out how to get a parking permit—or to find someone who could get the bookstore to stay open later in the evening.

Supportive Employers and Coworkers. In both Year 1 and Year 2, interviewees highlighted the need for working adult students in B.A. cohort programs to have supportive workplaces—an issue largely related to how best to fulfill the programs' required practicum experience. But more broadly, as an adjunct faculty member noted, "There needs to be time for reflection on the job. The biggest challenge for the students I work with is how hectic our lives are these days. To be a student, you really need some time to contemplate." CSU approached the problem by getting mentors to do pre- and post-visits with students in their workplaces, as well as meeting with them a number of times over the course of the semester.

Working students, we heard from our interview subjects, also need to build skills for integrating into their jobs what they are learning in school, which may involve a range of interpersonal issues. One faculty member described a variety of such issues:

> Students are having this transformative experience, and then they see roadblocks where they can't put into practice what they're learning. That's my impression. Some students have mentioned being excited about a new idea they learned in the teacher education class, but that they could never in a million years persuade a co-teacher to try to do things in a different way. My impression from students is not that the kids stress them out; many of them are veteran teachers, and they have learned to be patient. It's problems with co-workers or supervisors that can be extremely stressful.

The Ideal B.A. Completion Cohort Student

As noted earlier, interviewers posed one new question this year: "What is the ideal student for a BA completion cohort program for adults working in early childhood?" Responses fell into four general categories:

Work experience. For a variety of reasons, interviewees felt that a background of working "on the floor" with young children for a substantial period of time was an important criterion for joining such a cohort; one person suggested at least ten years of such experience. In order to get the most out of the courses in a B.A. cohort program, and to be clear about their post-B.A. career goals, they felt it was critical for students to "know what children from birth to six are like" (faculty member), and "how to deal with a group of preschoolers, so they're not shocked when they are placed in that environment" (dean).

Note, however, that respondents were not arguing against obtaining one's B.A. in ECE directly after high school, or working for long periods of time in the field without a B.A.; their comments were focused on what they saw as the ideal attributes of members of a B.A. cohort program for working adults.

Academic preparedness. Most subjects mentioned the importance of the students' having academic writing and critical thinking skills. Several expressed the opinion that it is best for entering students to have already completed their lower-division General Education courses. In institutions that accepted cohort students who hadn't done so, interviewees felt these students faced additional stress, and struggled harder with the demands of the program. One subject cited "the background knowledge necessary to participate and feel successful in small group discussions." Several noted the need for entering students to have good quantitative skills for completing upper-division requirements, because these were particularly hard to acquire once they were already in a B.A. program. For example:

> The math is more difficult, I would say, than any of the other classes. It's too much when you're here at a four-year university to take the subject you least like in the world. It can be overwhelming, especially in the beginning.

But at the same time, in discussing the "ideal" student, several subjects weighed the relative importance of academic readiness and experience in the field. Most seemed to feel that the greater maturity and experience of these working adult students "balanced" whatever academic challenges they brought to the program. To some extent, the way our subjects phrased these comments reflected the "comparison" group of students they had in mind. One subject, whose point of reference was traditional undergraduates, referred to the B.A. cohort students as "less skilled academically," but if the comparison group was other "nontraditional" students (e.g., older, working, first generation, etc.), the B.A. cohort students were seen as having a normal and acceptable level of ability to do college-level work.

School success skills. The essential skills noted most often were:

1. Writing, which some faculty felt they could assist with by providing rubrics (i.e., clearly defined guidelines and expectations for written work), and by giving students critical feedback on their writing skills as well as the content of their written work.
2. Computer and technological skills, which some interviewees felt that students should enter with, and that community colleges could focus more on. As one faculty member said, "I think a lot of it has to do with how scared they are. They're scared about the computer, they're scared about Blackboard."
3. Planning skills, i.e., knowing how to budget their time and organize themselves toward meeting their academic goals.

Personal attributes. Among the personal qualities cited as most desirable in a B.A. cohort student, foremost was intellectual curiosity, or as one interviewee called it, "a flame for lifelong learning." A department chair said, "We hope to get the kind of students who understand that this is a springboard for them. We want them to continue to study—to take workshops, seminars, be active in their profession." Several interviewees noted that cohort students should be mature and emotionally stable, committed to taking care of themselves, and having support from family members or others. Further, they felt that students should bring passion and drive to such a program—the willingness to make

school a priority, and a commitment to completing their studies and staying in the field of ECE. Other attributes mentioned in the interviews included: pragmatic, patient, collaborative, oriented toward service, and having "integrity and heart."

Finally, besides these four general categories that seemed to define the ideal cohort student, it was notable how frequently the interviewees cited the actual benefits, advantages, and pleasures of working with this population of adult students—people who are already active, and experienced, in the ECE field. First, they said that, compared to more "traditional" or pre-service students who are going into education, these students bring the advantage of already knowing that they can teach, and like to do so, and want to pursue it further as a profession. As one faculty member said,

> Any credential student who has gone straight from college into teaching has some trepidation—such as, "Am I going to make it?" It's good when students have figured this out already, and in a sense they're an easier group to work with. There are some challenges in terms of the academic piece of the picture, but I think from the practical side, it's easier.

In addition, we heard repeatedly that cohort students' contributions to class discussions and exploration of materials were deeper because of their professional experience. A faculty member told us,

> The students are fabulous; they add so much to everybody's experience. They inform the faculty about what it's really like out there, and they bring *gravitas* to the course in terms of working with younger students. For the younger students, too, it may well be the first time they've worked as colleagues and equals with people the same age as their parents.

A department chair concluded,

> The older students are better students. Some of them don't think they are as good, but they are. They've been around the block—and I hope that what we're able to do is help them begin to understand how much their own experience is worth.

Program Sustainability: The Future of the B.A. Cohort Programs

In Year 1, when our respondents were asked whether and how they could sustain their B.A. cohorts without continued assistance from First 5, we received a range of answers about wanting to keep the programs going, but being unsure how to do so.

In Year 2, we received somewhat different responses from these two institutions. The private nonprofit college had decided to end the program, more from a lack of fit between the cohort model and the college, than from a lack or loss of funding. The dean with whom we spoke at that college also discussed these issues in the context of students' prospects in the ECE profession once they had completed a B.A.; the issue of poor compensation in the field came to the forefront:

> The combination of discounting tuition and what First 5 could give wasn't enough to allow the floodgates to open and students to pour in. Students had to take loans, and morally that was hard, because of their salaries. What is a reasonable amount of debt for a job that pays $23,000 a year? Do we ask people to take out loans? Do we train people for something they can't afford to continue doing?

At CSU, respondents told us that they would keep the cohort program going without First 5 funds, but would have to reduce their level of student support. Nevertheless, as a CSU faculty member told us,

> The good thing for the major is that we service these students normally anyway. There would still be someone for them to talk with or email. The classes would be there. They probably wouldn't have the teacher education minor, and that would be a shame, but they could still finish their bachelor's degree. They would have to be more responsible for enrolling into any lower division GED classes.

A CSU dean added, "I think we'd have the hardest time with financial aid for students. What we would try to do is leverage the financial aid we already have through the normal financial aid process at the university."

Discussion and Conclusion

In its first two years, the *Learning Together* study of B.A. completion programs for working adult students in ECE has focused on the issues of access, student success, and institutional change—and has seen resounding evidence of the success and promise of these programs thus far. We have addressed the following three questions:

1. Are such programs an effective strategy to help working adults in ECE access and succeed in higher education?
2. How do students perceive the impact of the cohort experience on their professional practice?
3. Can institutions of higher education, with sufficient support, create and maintain such programs successfully?

Student Access and Success

This year, our student interviewees strongly reiterated their Year 1 reports about the success of their B.A. cohort programs in allowing them access to higher education and in supporting their academic progress toward a degree. We also gained new information about the services and supports that remained necessary to them throughout their cohort experience, and those that became of lesser importance to some or most students as time went on.

There are multiple ways of defining and measuring "success" in a higher education effort such as these B.A. cohort programs—e.g., facilitating greater student access; increasing student retention and graduation rates; promoting and retaining the diversity of well educated members of the ECE workforce—and our findings thus far suggest a pattern of success in all these areas.

Students resoundingly saw the cohort model itself as having enabled them to access a B.A.-level education, and to succeed in it, in a way that would not otherwise have been possible. Indeed, their sense of the importance of the cohort structure had increased over time, from 73 percent of students saying they viewed it as very or extremely important when they started the program, to 88 percent feeling this way at the

time of the Year 2 interview. Besides the cohort nature of this model, students also assigned a very high importance to other structural features throughout their participation in the programs—namely, substantial financial aid, convenient locations of classes, and flexible scheduling that allowed them to combine school with ECE teaching jobs.

But as institutions of higher education consider the costs of maintaining such cohort programs, especially as levels of outside funding decrease, we also learned from students that it may be possible to reduce certain services over time, such as tutoring and language support, but that these nonetheless remained an ongoing need for a significant minority of students.

Students' View of the Impact of Cohort Programs on Their Professional Practice

At this stage of the study, we have gathered students' own self-assessments about the role of their B.A. cohort program in improving their professional practice on the job with children and families. Future years of the study will include observations of cohort students in the classroom, which will allow for more detailed and nuanced analysis of these effects. But thus far, we have received highly positive self-assessments, with students overwhelmingly reporting that their cohort program coursework has helped them in their jobs.

Year 2 of the study has also marked the beginning of our investigation of the nature and impact of the practicum component of B.A. completion cohort programs for working adults. At this stage, a number of students had not yet completed the practicum, limiting our findings thus far. But a number of unresolved issues about the "ideal" components of the practicum emerged in this year's findings this year, signaling several areas for further study in Year 3 and beyond. For example: Is a working student's practicum best undertaken in one's own ECE classroom, in a different classroom or site, or in a combination of locations? What type of oversight of practicum students should there be, and what kind of person, in what role, should deliver it—a mentor or coach, a supervisor, a college or university instructor, or a combination of these? What should be

that person's background and level of experience? Further, at what point of the B.A. cohort program is it best for the practicum to occur?

We also began hearing from students about some of the challenges of the practicum experience, with 55 percent reporting some increased difficulty in balancing school, work, and family issues, and 29 percent reporting some loss of income during the practicum period. Further, while students told us that their cohort programs had made a positive impact on their jobs, we heard about some of the challenges of implementing what one learns in a B.A.-level ECE program in a "real-world" ECE classroom, including disconnects between varying approaches, and possible resistance from one's supervisor and/or co-workers.

The Learning Together study, fortunately, will be able to increase our knowledge base about these and other successes and challenges in future years, as more cohort students complete their practicum. The study team will also continue to investigate student experience at the beginning, midpoint, and post-graduation phases of cohort programs, including interviews with graduates from four or more of the six institutions. We will look more closely at student practice, with workplace observations of students from at least two cohort programs in two counties. Finally, we will also be able to track the career trajectories of participants, gaining information about whether cohort program graduates remain and/or advance in their positions, receive increased compensation, and pursue further education.

Institutional Challenges and Successes

This year's interviews provided further insight into what comprises a good fit between an institution of higher education and a B.A. cohort program for working adults in early care and education. With one institution deciding not to continue its program, and another about to initiate its third cohort in Fall 2009, we have begun to obtain a more well-rounded picture of the crucial institutional supports and elements that allow such programs to thrive or not. A working student population requires a certain institutional orientation toward student supports and services, and a willingness to find creative

solutions to such issues as maneuvering through institutional bureaucracy and arranging field practicum experiences. This requires leadership within the institution dedicated to this type of program, as well as sufficient resources to make it viable and to provide the intensive supports that students need.

This year's investigation underscored the importance of congruity between the working-student B.A. cohort model and an institution's philosophy and mission. We heard repeatedly of the key roles played by on-campus "champions" or point persons who were available to students, knowledgeable about institutional history and politics, and able to address and reduce barriers. Such a person, we were told, did not have to wear all hats, but ideally served at least as a "traffic controller" or go-between who could point students in the right direction. We heard, too, that institutions needed to be open to reflecting on and adapting what they do, in order to successfully incorporate such a new program model. Indeed, a number of interviewees spoke of their realization that, to some degree, *all* students need and deserve the kinds of support that have become available to these B.A.-completion cohort participants.

Our institutional respondents were also highly concerned this year with questions of the sustainability of their cohort programs. Consistent financial support, ideally from public sources, remained essential; even the most successful programs found it doubtful that they could continue their pilot cohort models at the same level without external funding, and were highly aware that First 5 funds would gradually diminish. But while demonstration projects of this kind are by their nature expensive, we did begin to receive some indication that over time, and with the operation of multiple cohorts, costs per student can go down significantly.

* * * * *

This second phase of our multi-year investigation of B.A. completion cohort programs for working students has strengthened our first-year findings about the potential of such programs to build a successful, well-trained, diverse cadre of teachers and leaders in early care and education. As other California communities and other states consider

larger-scale approaches to the effective preparation of ECE teachers, these six programs under study have the potential to become models for the entire profession. As the study team continues to investigate the experience of beginning, mid-range, and graduating cohort students in a variety of programs; to observe cohort students' ECE classroom practice; and to chart institutional experience and change at these colleges and universities, we hope to offer a continually deeper and more nuanced understanding of the contribution of the B.A. cohort model to the entire early care and education field.

Appendix Figures

Figure A-1: Academic Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at CSU - East Bay

Figure A-2: Academic Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Mills College

Figure A-3: Academic Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Francisco State University

Figure A-4: Academic Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Jose State University

Figure A-5: Academic Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Antioch University

Category	Not/Not much of a challenge	Fairly challenging	Very/extremely challenging
Academic Writing Start of Cohort (N=22)	14	32	55
Academic Writing Winter 2009 (N=22)	73	23	5
Academic Reading Start of Cohort (N=22)	36	23	41
Academic Reading Winter 2009 (N=22)	77	18	5
Math Start of Cohort (N=18)	22	33	44
Math Winter 2009 (N=17)	71	24	6
Academic English* Start of Cohort (N=7)	43	29	29
Academic English* Winter 2009 (N=7)	72	29	0

Percentage of students

Figure A-6: Academic Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at the University of La Verne

Category	Not/Not much of a challenge	Fairly challenging	Very/extremely challenging
Academic Writing Start of Cohort (N=10)	30	20	50
Academic Writing Winter 2009 (N=11)	64	27	9
Academic Reading Start of Cohort (N=10)	40	40	20
Academic Reading Winter 2009 (N=11)	73	18	9
Math Start of Cohort (N=8)	13	38	50
Math Winter 2009 (N=10)	40	20	40
Academic English* Start of Cohort (N=5)	20	20	60
Academic English* Winter 2009 (N=6)	67	33	0

Percentage of students

Figure A-7: Skills-Related Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at CSU-East Bay

Category	Not/Not much of a challenge	Fairly challenging	Very/extremely challenging
Study Skills Start of Cohort (N=11)	18	36	46
Study Skills Winter 2009 (N=11)	73	18	9
Oral Presentations Start of Cohort (N=11)	18	18	64
Oral Presentations Winter 2009 (N=11)	55	27	18
Using Computers Start of Cohort (N=11)	9	27	64
Using Computers Winter 2009 (N=11)	73	18	9

Figure A-8: Skills-Related Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Mills College

Category	Not/Not much of a challenge	Fairly challenging	Very/extremely challenging
Study Skills Start of Cohort (N=5)	40	20	40
Study Skills Winter 2009 (N=5)	100		0
Oral Presentations Start of Cohort (N=5)	80	20	0
Oral Presentations Winter 2009 (N=5)	100		0
Using Computers Start of Cohort (N=5)	40	20	40
Using Computers Winter 2009 (N=5)	40	40	20

Figure A-9: Skills-Related Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Francisco State University

Percentage of students

Category	Not/Not much of a challenge	Fairly challenging	Very/extremely challenging
Study Skills Start of Cohort (N=25)	48	16	36
Study Skills Winter 2009 (N=25)	68	4	28
Oral Presentations Start of Cohort (N=25)	16	24	60
Oral Presentations Winter 2009 (N=25)	84	4	12
Using Computers Start of Cohort (N=25)	44	16	40
Using Computers Winter 2009 (N=25)	92	4	4

☐ Not/Not much of a challenge ☐ Fairly challenging ☐ Very/extremely challenging

Figure A-10: Skills-Related Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Jose State University

Percentage of students

Category	Not/Not much of a challenge	Fairly challenging	Very/extremely challenging
Study Skills Start of Cohort (N=28)	29	25	46
Study Skills Winter 2009 (N=28)	68	11	21
Oral Presentations Start of Cohort (N=28)	29	21	50
Oral Presentations Winter 2009 (N=28)	54	21	25
Using Computers Start of Cohort (N=28)	47	11	43
Using Computers Winter 2009 (N=28)	68	29	4

☐ Not/Not much of a challenge ☐ Fairly challenging ☐ Very/extremely challenging

Figure A-11: Skills-Related Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Antioch University

	Study Skills Start of Cohort (N=22)	Study Skills Winter 2009 (N=22)	Oral Presentations Start of Cohort (N=22)	Oral Presentations Winter 2009 (N=22)	Using Computers Start of Cohort (N=22)	Using Computers Winter 2009 (N=22)
Very/extremely challenging	32	9	59	5	14	0
Fairly challenging	32	5	14	23	27	0
Not/Not much of a challenge	36	86	27	73	59	96

□ Not/Not much of a challenge ▨ Fairly challenging ■ Very/extremely challenging

Figure A-12: Skills-Related Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at the University of La Verne

	Study Skills Start of Cohort (N=10)	Study Skills Winter 2009 (N=11)	Oral Presentations Start of Cohort (N=10)	Oral Presentations Winter 2009 (N=11)	Using Computers Start of Cohort (N=10)	Using Computers Winter 2009 (N=11)
Very/extremely challenging	40	0	70	18	50	9
Fairly challenging	40	18	0	9	30	18
Not/Not much of a challenge	20	82	30	73	20	73

□ Not/Not much of a challenge ▨ Fairly challenging ■ Very/extremely challenging

Figure A-13: Personal Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at CSU-East Bay

Percentage of students

Category	Value
Balancing Work and School Start of Cohort (N=11)	Very: 91, Not: 0/9
Balancing Work and School Winter 2009 (N=11)	Very: 27, Fairly: 36, Not: 36
Balancing Family and School Start of Cohort (N=11)	Very: 64, Fairly: 36, Not: 0
Balancing Family and School Winter 2009 (N=11)	Very: 9, Fairly: 73, Not: 18

□ Not/Not much of a challenge □ Fairly challenging ■ Very/extremely challenging

Figure A-14: Personal Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Mills College

Percentage of students

Category	Value
Balancing Work and School Start of Cohort (N=5)	Very: 40, Fairly: 60, Not: 0
Balancing Work and School Winter 2009 (N=5)	0, Fairly: 100, Not: 0
Balancing Family and School Start of Cohort (N=5)	0, Fairly: 20, Not: 80
Balancing Family and School Winter 2009 (N=5)	0, Fairly: 20, Not: 80

□ Not/Not much of a challenge □ Fairly challenging ■ Very/extremely challenging

Figure A-15: Personal Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Francisco State University

Percentage of students

	Balancing Work and School Start of Cohort (N=25)	Balancing Work and School Winter 2009 (N=25)	Balancing Family and School Start of Cohort (N=25)	Balancing Family and School Winter 2009 (N=25)
Very/extremely challenging	68	36	52	32
Fairly challenging	16	12	20	16
Not/Not much of a challenge	16	52	28	52

☐ Not/Not much of a challenge ☐ Fairly challenging ☐ Very/extremely challenging

Figure A-16: Personal Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Jose State University

Percentage of students

	Balancing Work and School Start of Cohort (N=28)	Balancing Work and School Winter 2009 (N=28)	Balancing Family and School Start of Cohort (N=28)	Balancing Family and School Winter 2009 (N=28)
Very/extremely challenging	50	39	39	46
Fairly challenging	21	18	32	18
Not/Not much of a challenge	29	43	29	36

☐ Not/Not much of a challenge ☐ Fairly challenging ☐ Very/extremely challenging

Figure A-17: Personal Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Antioch University

Percentage of students

68	27	59	18
18	23	23	27
14	50	18	55

Balancing Work and School Start of Cohort (N=22) | Balancing Work and School Winter 2009 (N=22) | Balancing Family and School Start of Cohort (N=22) | Balancing Family and School Winter 2009 (N=22)

☐ Not/Not much of a challenge ☐ Fairly challenging ☐ Very/extremely challenging

Figure A-18: Personal Challenges at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at the University of La Verne

Percentage of students

70	36	50	36
10	9	30	36
20	55	20	27

Balancing Work and School Start of Cohort (N=10) | Balancing Work and School Winter 2009 (N=11) | Balancing Family and School Start of Cohort (N=10) | Balancing Family and School Winter 2009 (N=11)

☐ Not/Not much of a challenge ☐ Fairly challenging ☐ Very/extremely challenging

Figure A-19: Importance of Cohort Program Structure at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at CSU-East Bay
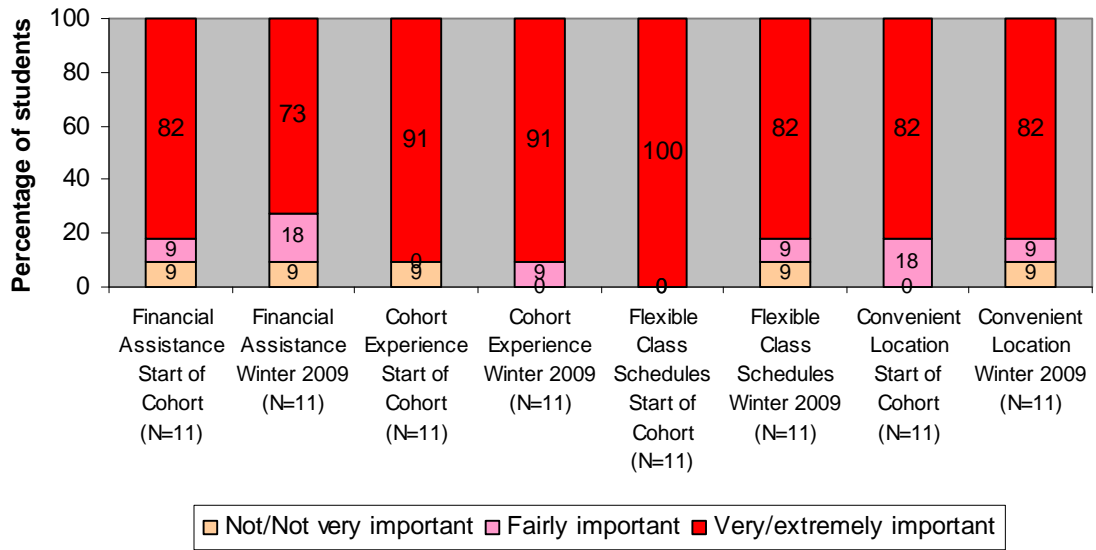
Figure A-20: Importance of Cohort Program Structure at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Mills College
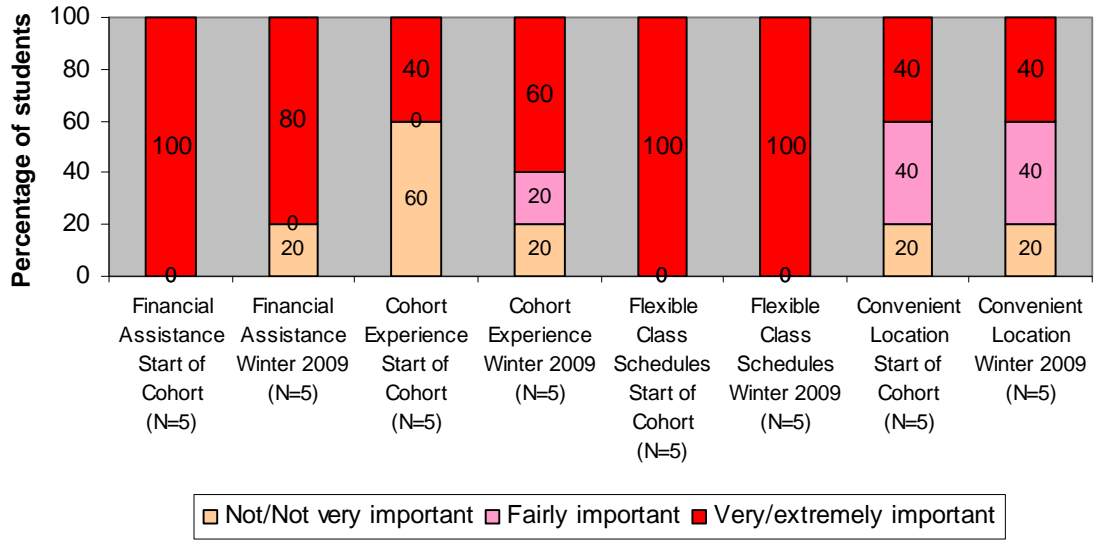
Figure A-21: Importance of Cohort Program Structure at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Francisco State University
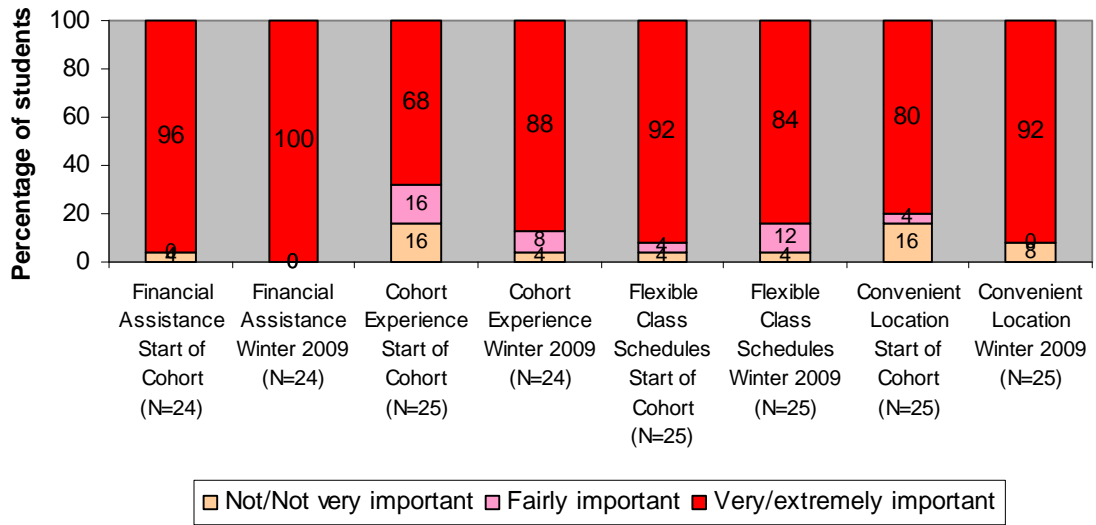
Figure A-22: Importance of Cohort Program Structure at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Jose State University
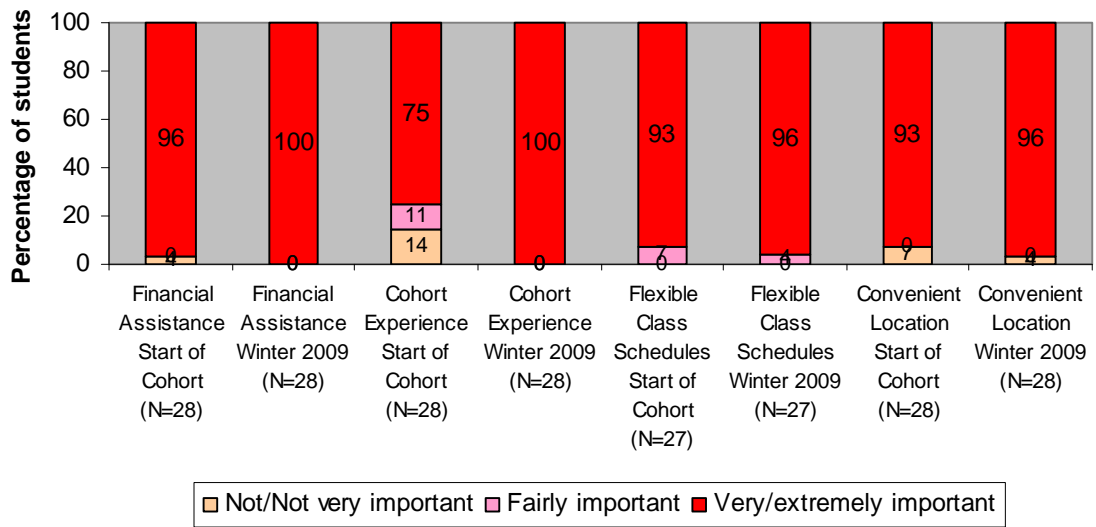
Figure A-23: Importance of Cohort Program Structure at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Antioch University
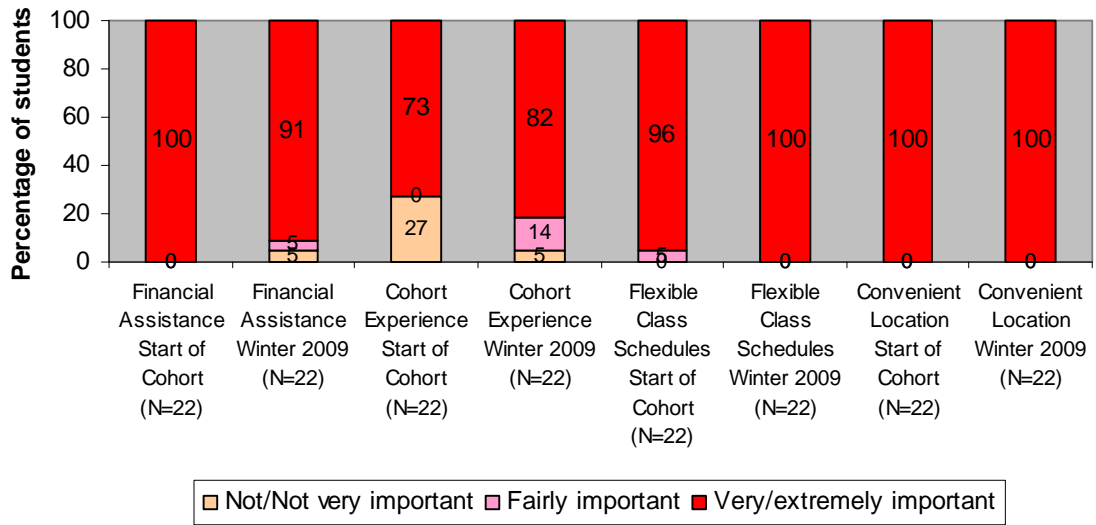
Figure A-24: Importance of Cohort Program Structure at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at the University of La Verne
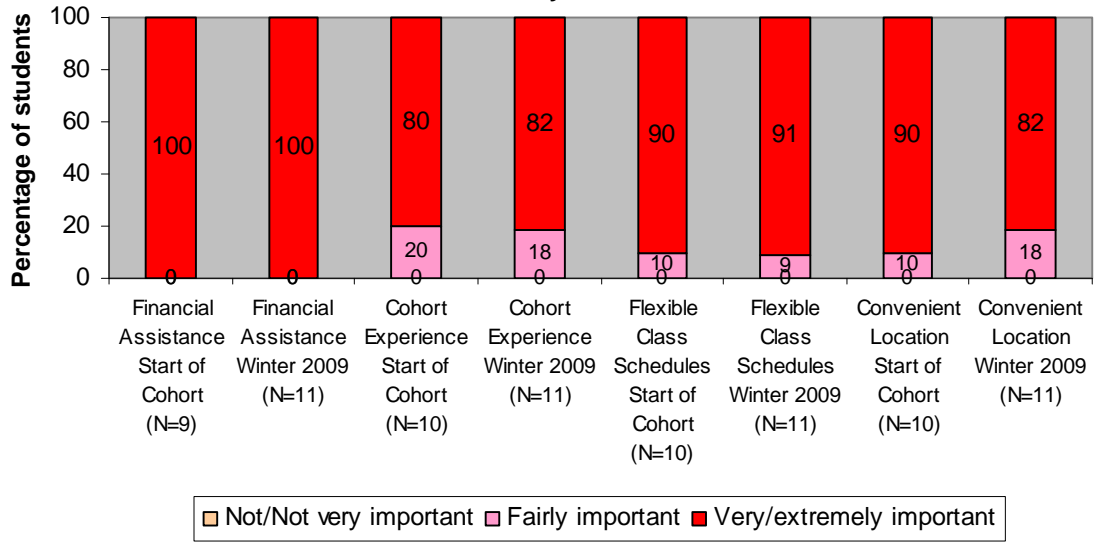
Figure A-25: Importance of the Cohort Program Services at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at CSU-East Bay

Service	Not/Not very important	Fairly important	Very/extremely important
Academic Tutoring Start of Cohort (N=11)	27	27	46
Academic Tutoring Winter 2009 (N=11)	27	36	36
Computer Assistance Start of Cohort (N=11)	9	27	64
Computer Assistance Winter 2009 (N=11)	55	27	18
Academic Counseling Start of Cohort (N=11)	9	18	73
Academic Counseling Winter 2009 (N=11)	46	0	55
English Language* Assistance Start of Cohort (N=3)	33	0	67
English Language* Assistance Winter 2009 (N=3)	33	33	33
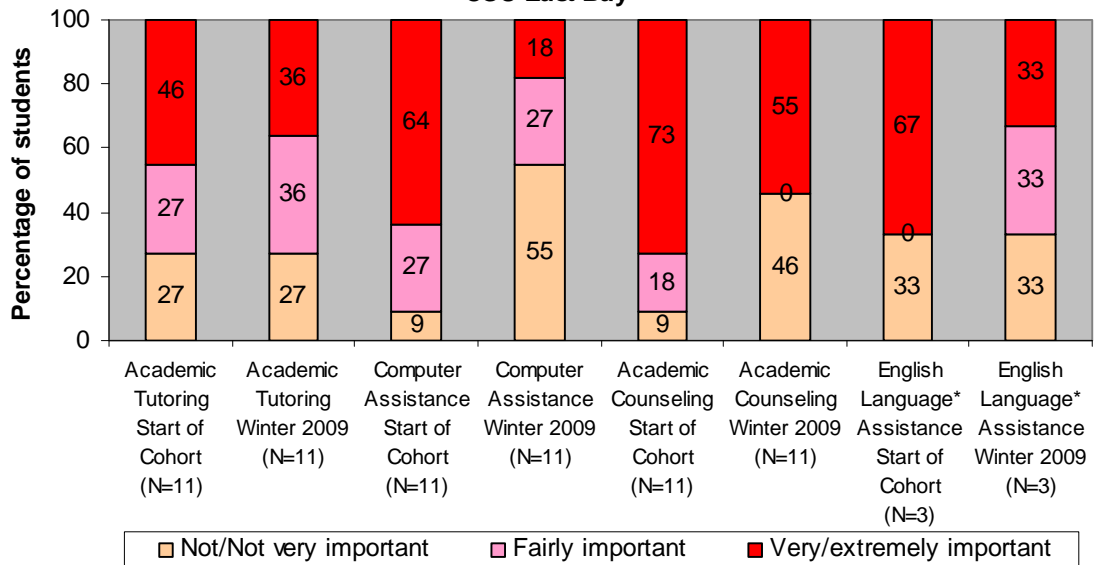
Figure A-26: Importance of the Cohort Program Services at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Mills College

Service	Not/Not very important	Fairly important	Very/extremely important
Academic Tutoring Start of Cohort (N=5)	60	0	40
Academic Tutoring Winter 2009 (N=5)	60	0	40
Computer Assistance Start of Cohort (N=5)	40	20	40
Computer Assistance Winter 2009 (N=5)	60	0	40
Academic Counseling Start of Cohort (N=5)	20	20	60
Academic Counseling Winter 2009 (N=5)	0	40	60
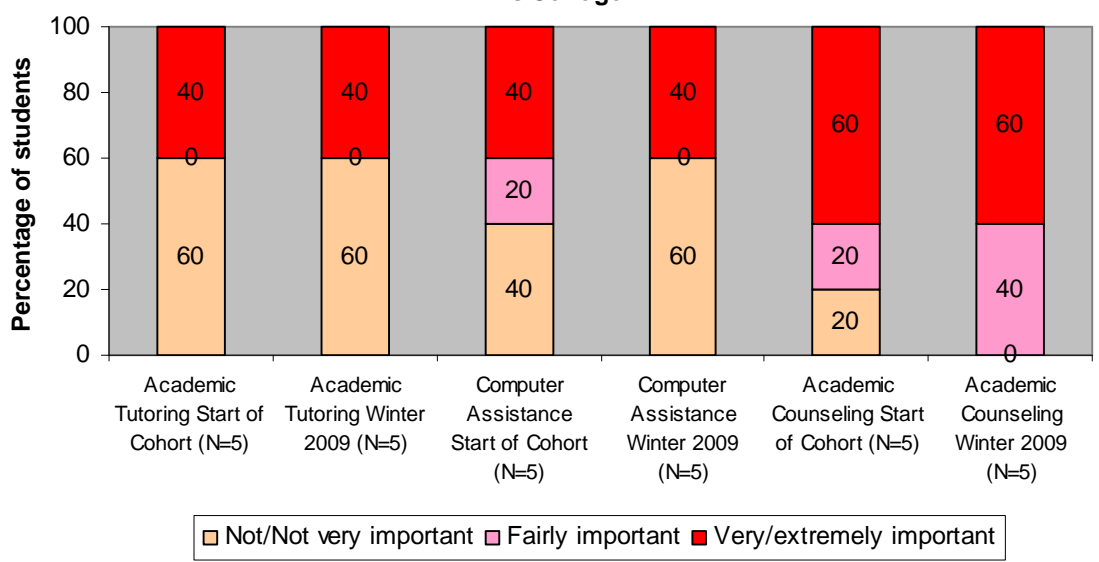
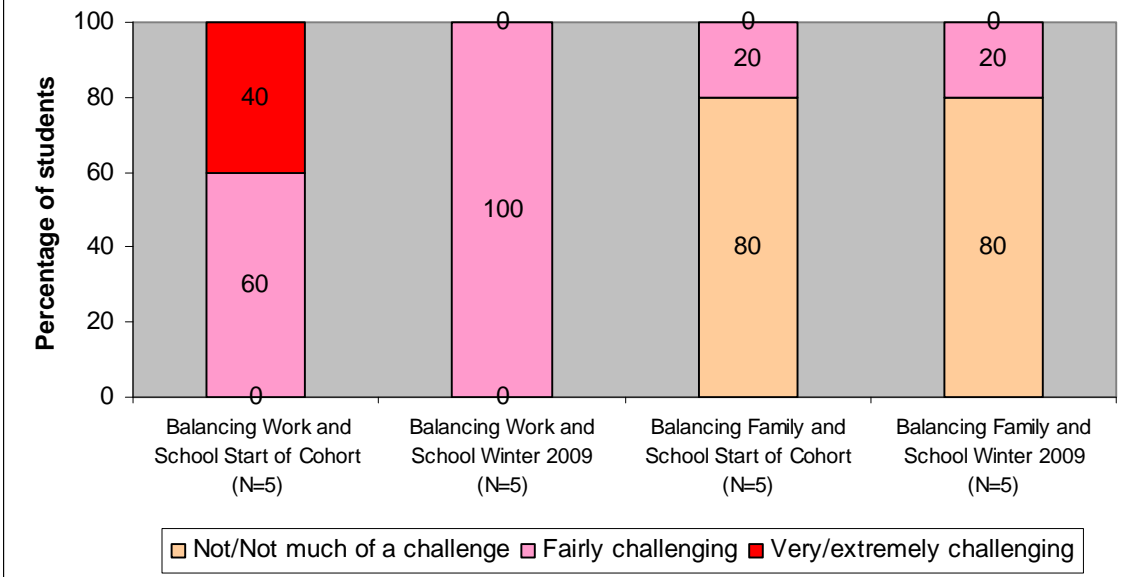**Figure A-27: Importance of the Cohort Program Services at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Francisco State University**
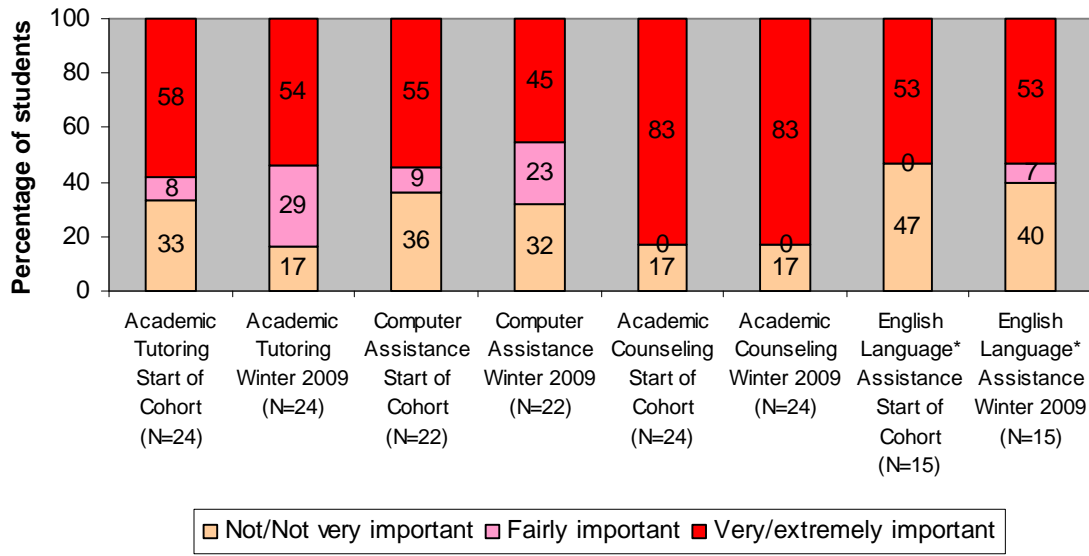
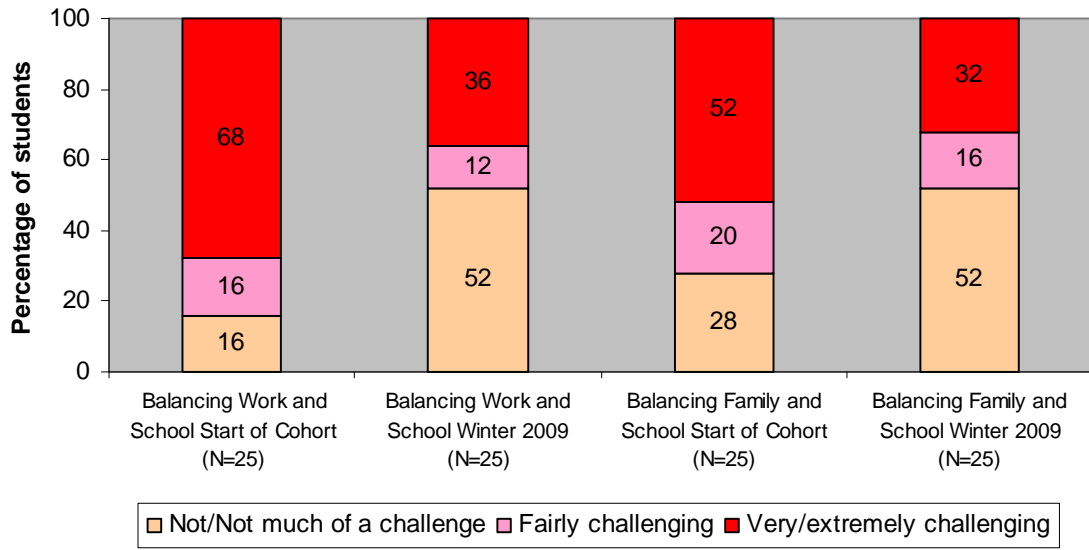**Figure A-28: Importance of the Cohort Program Services at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Jose State University**
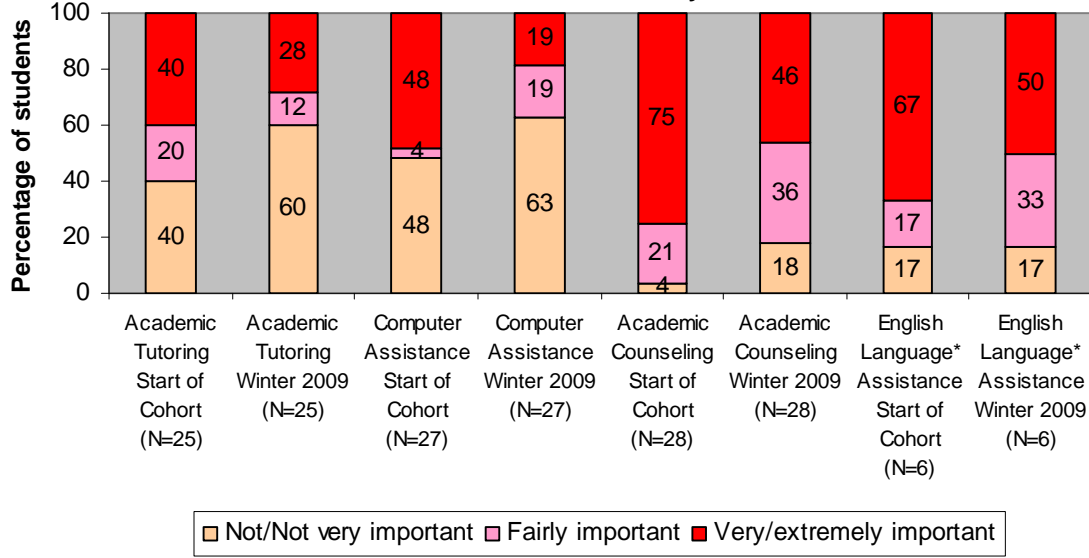
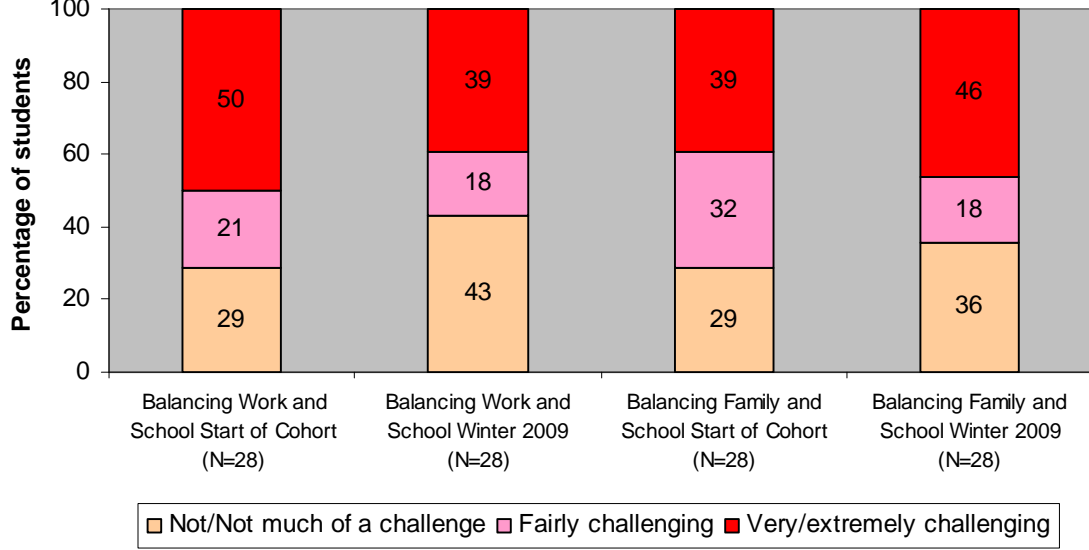**Figure A-29: Importance of the Cohort Program Services at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Antioch University**

Service	Not/Not very important	Fairly important	Very/extremely important
Academic Tutoring Start of Cohort (N=22)	32	14	55
Academic Tutoring Winter 2009 (N=22)	45	27	27
Computer Assistance Start of Cohort (N=20)	55	15	30
Computer Assistance Winter 2009 (N=20)	65	10	25
Academic Counseling Start of Cohort (N=22)	18	23	59
Academic Counseling Winter 2009 (N=22)	36	14	50
English Language* Assistance Start of Cohort (N=6)	67	17	17
English Language* Assistance Winter 2009 (N=6)	83	0	17

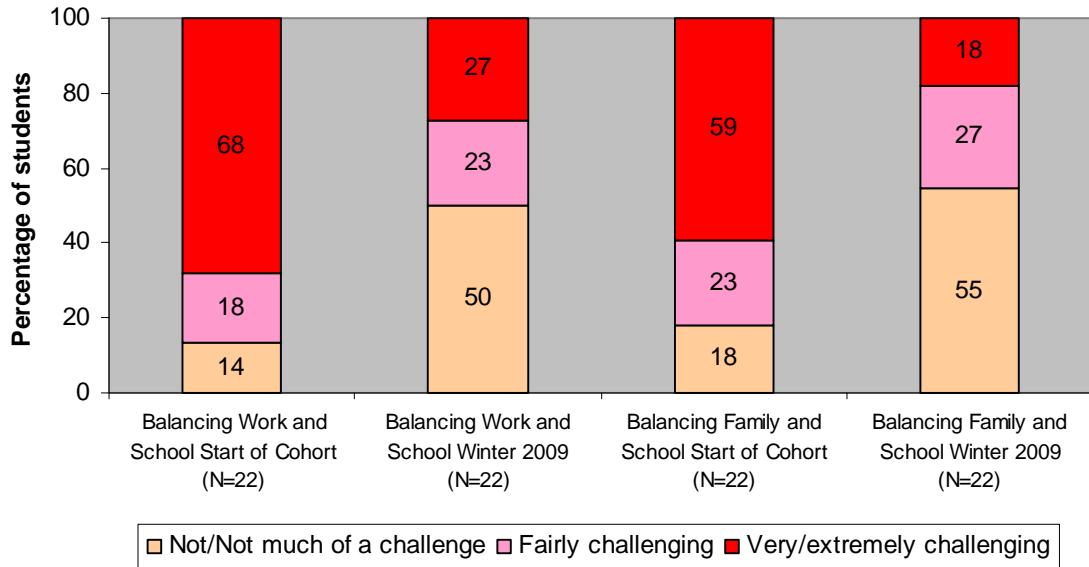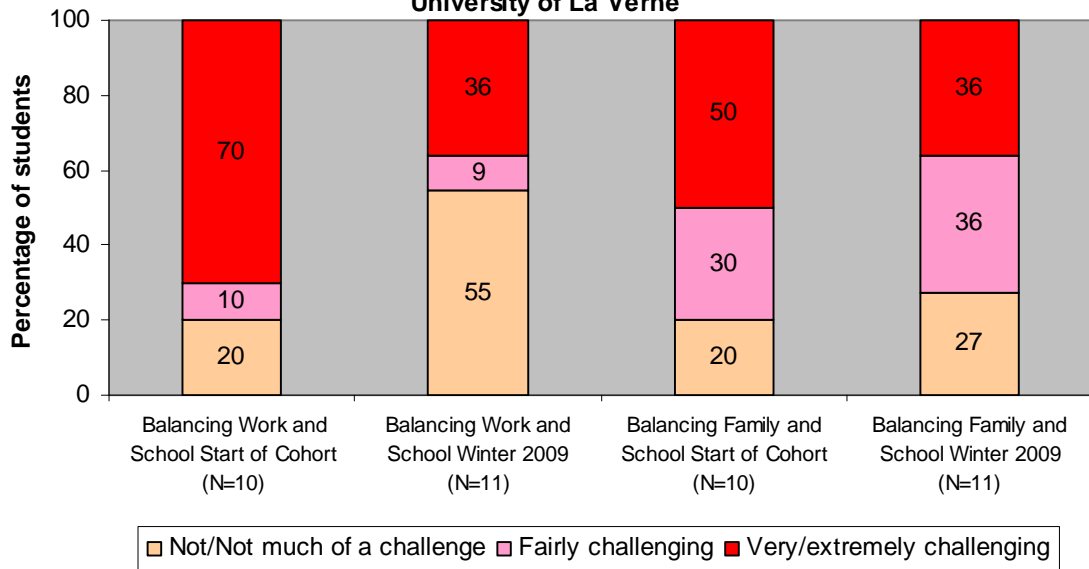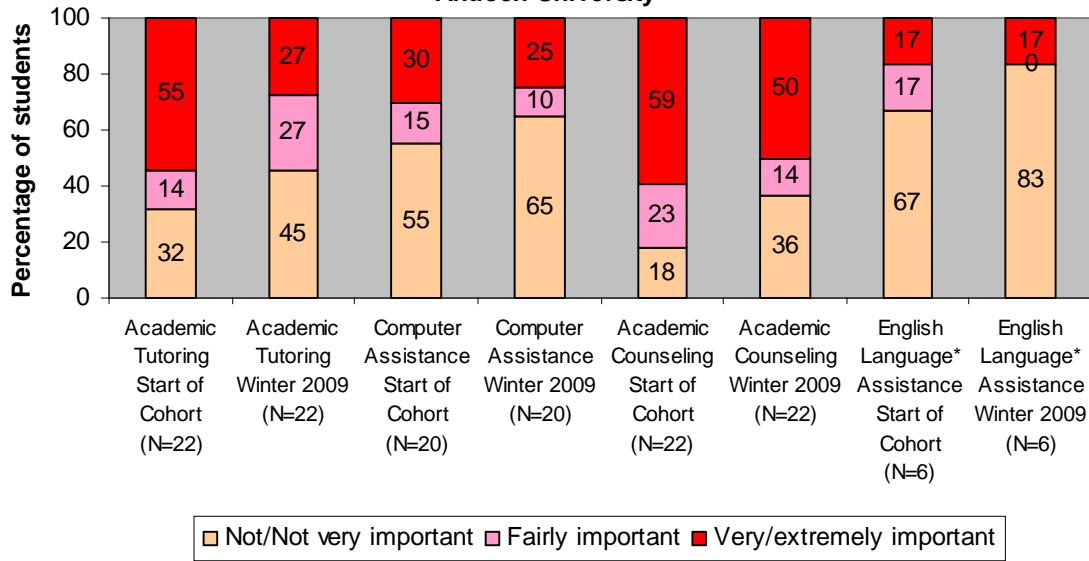**Figure A-30: Importance of the Cohort Program Services at Two Points in Time, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at the University of La Verne**

Service	Not/Not very important	Fairly important	Very/extremely important
Academic Tutoring Start of Cohort (N=8)	25	13	63
Academic Tutoring Winter 2009 (N=9)	33	22	44
Computer Assistance Start of Cohort (N=8)	13	25	63
Computer Assistance Winter 2009 (N=9)	22	44	33
Academic Counseling Start of Cohort (N=10)	10	10	80
Academic Counseling Winter 2009 (N=11)	18	0	82
English Language* Assistance Start of Cohort (N=4)	25	25	50
English Language* Assistance Winter 2009 (N=5)	20	40	40
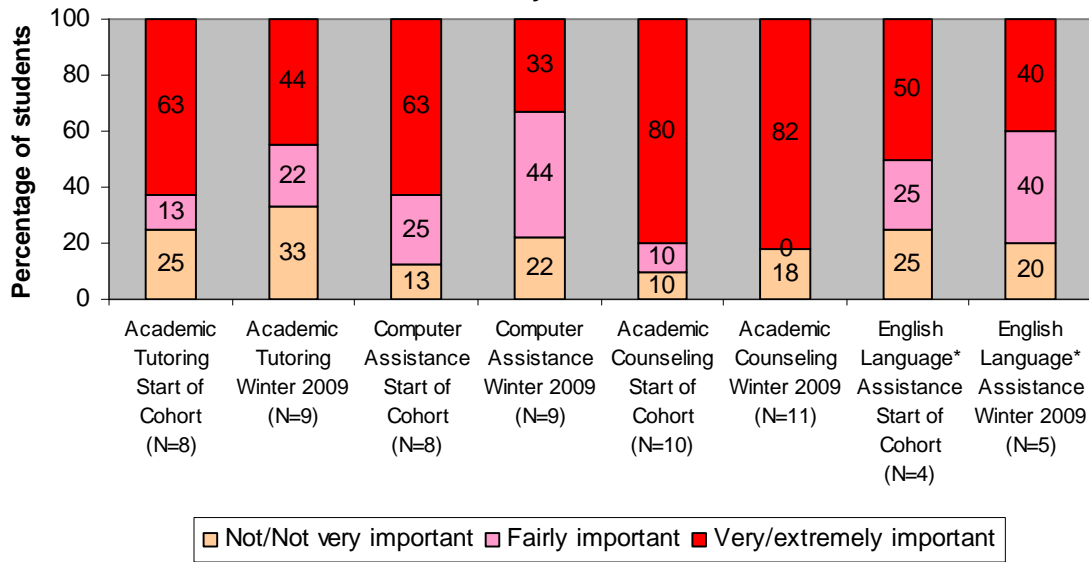
Figure A-31: Impact of Courses on Classroom Practice, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at CSU-East Bay

Percentage of students

100	100	73
		18
0	0	9

Develop Positive Interactions (N=11) — Positive Emotional Environment (N=11) — Positive Instructional Environment (N=11)

☐ Not/Not very helpful ☐ Fairly helpful ☐ Very/extemely helpful
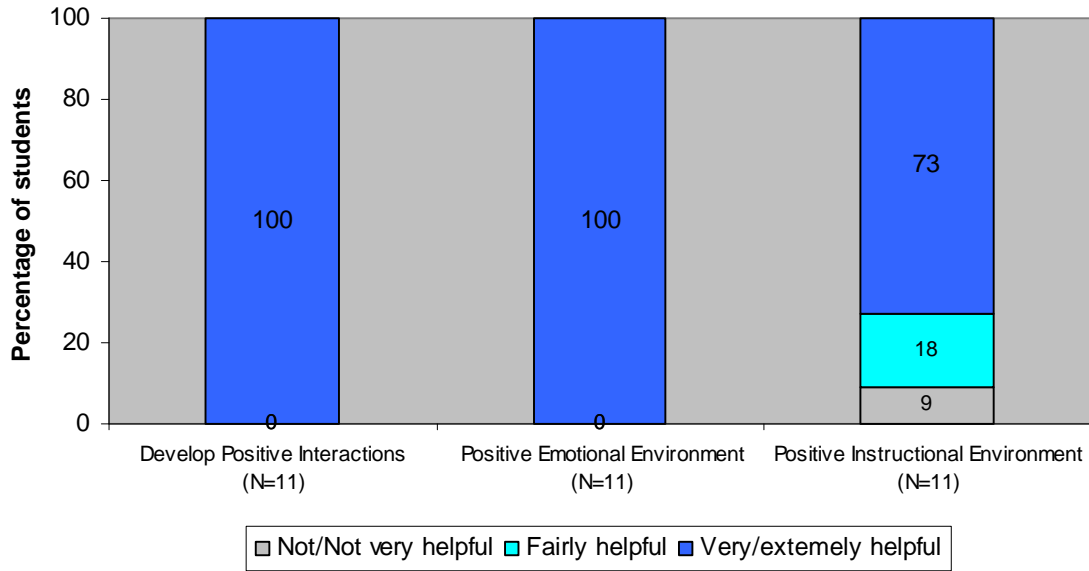
Figure A-32: Impact of Courses on Classroom Practice, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Mills College

Percentage of students

80	100	80
20		20
0	0	0

Develop Positive Interactions (N=5) — Positive Emotional Environment (N=5) — Positive Instructional Environment (N=5)

☐ Not/Not very helpful ☐ Fairly helpful ☐ Very/extremely helpful
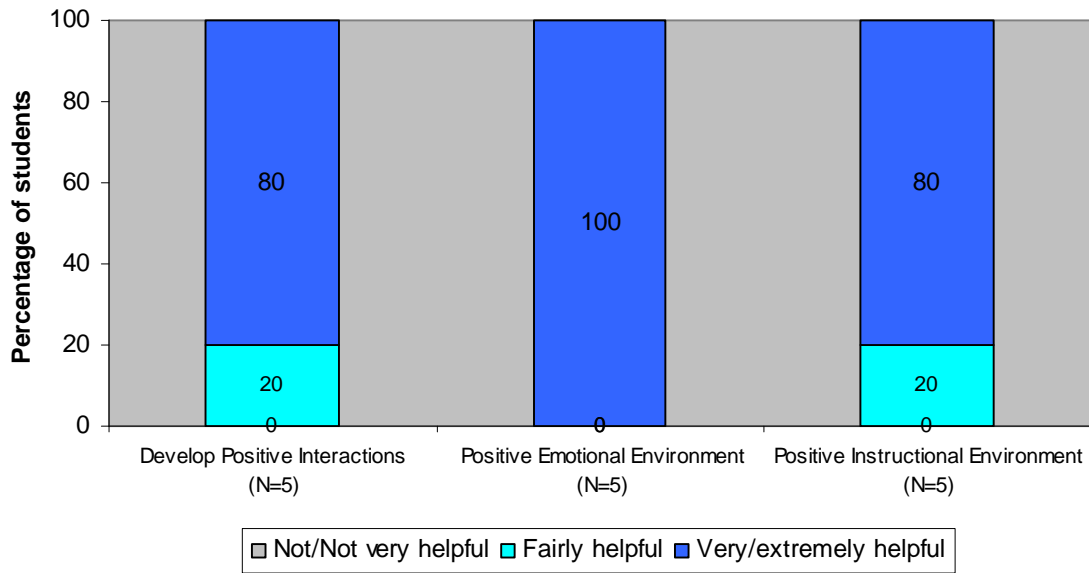
Figure A-33: Impact of Courses on Classroom Practice, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Francisco State University

Percentage of students

	Develop Positive Interactions (N=25)	Positive Emotional Environment (N=25)	Positive Instructional Environment (N=25)
Very/extremely helpful	76	84	88
Fairly helpful	16	12	8
Not/Not very helpful	8	4	4

□ Not/Not very helpful □ Fairly helpful ■ Very/extremely helpful
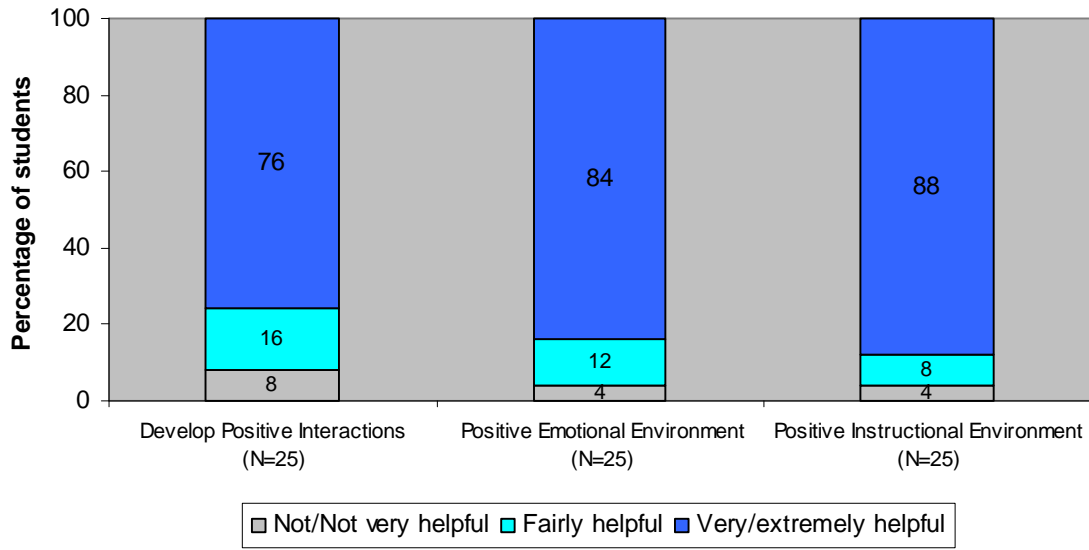
Figure A-34: Impact of Courses on Classroom Practice, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Jose State University

Percentage of students

	Develop Positive Interactions (N=27)	Positive Emotional Environment (N=28)	Positive Instructional Environment (N=28)
Very/extremely helpful	70	93	68
Fairly helpful	19		25
Not/Not very helpful	11	9	7

□ Not/Not very helpful □ Fairly helpful ■ Very/extremely helpful

Figure A-35: Impact of Courses on Classroom Practice, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Antioch University

Percentage of students	Develop Positive Interactions (N=22)	Positive Emotional Environment (N=22)	Positive Instructional Environment (N=22)
Very/extremely helpful	77	77	77
Fairly helpful	9	14	18
Not/Not very helpful	14	9	5

Legend: ☐ Not/Not very helpful ☐ Fairly helpful ☐ Very/extremely helpful

Figure A-36: Impact of Courses on Classroom Practice, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at the University of La Verne

Percentage of students	Develop Positive Interactions (N=11)	Positive Emotional Environment (N=11)	Positive Instructional Environment (N=11)
Very/extremely helpful	64	64	64
Fairly helpful	18	9	18
Not/Not very helpful	18	27	18

Legend: ☐ Not/Not very helpful ☐ Fairly helpful ☐ Very/extremely helpful

Figure A-37: Impact of Courses on the Ability to Teach Skills to Children, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at CSU-East Bay

Legend: ☐ Not/Not very helpful ☐ Fairly helpful ☐ Very/extremely helpful

Language and Literacy Skills (N=11): 91, 9, 0
Social Skills (N=11): 91, 9, 0
Math Skills (N=11): 73, 18, 9
Science Skills (N=11): 73, 18, 9

Figure A-38: Impact of Courses on the Ability to Teach Skills to Children, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Mills College

Legend: ☐ Not/Not very helpful ☐ Fairly helpful ☐ Very/extremely helpful

Language and Literacy Skills (N=5): 60, 40, 0
Social Skills (N=5): 80, 20, 0
Math Skills (N=5): 40, 0, 60
Science Skills (N=5): 40, 20, 40

Figure A-39: Impact of Courses on the Ability to Teach Skills to Children, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Francisco State University

Legend: ☐ Not/Not very helpful ☐ Fairly helpful ☐ Very/extremely helpful

Figure A-40: Impact of Courses on the Ability to Teach Skills to Children, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Jose State University

Legend: ☐ Not/Not very helpful ☐ Fairly helpful ☐ Very/extremely helpful

Figure A-41: Impact of Courses on the Ability to Teach Skills to Children, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Antioch University

Percentage of students

	Language and Literacy Skills (N=22)	Social Skills (N=22)	Math Skills (N=22)	Science Skills (N=22)
Not/Not very helpful	14	9	5	5
Fairly helpful	18	9	27	27
Very/extremely helpful	68	82	68	68

□ Not/Not very helpful □ Fairly helpful ■ Very/extremely helpful

Figure A-42: Impact of Courses on the Ability to Teach Skills to Children, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at the University of La Verne

Percentage of students

	Language and Literacy Skills (N=11)	Social Skills (N=11)	Math Skills (N=11)	Science Skills (N=10)
Not/Not very helpful	0	18	9	30
Fairly helpful	27	27	9	30
Very/extremely helpful	73	55	82	40

□ Not/Not very helpful □ Fairly helpful ■ Very/extremely helpful

Figure A-43: Impact of Courses on Working with Diverse Groups of Children, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort at CSU-East Bay
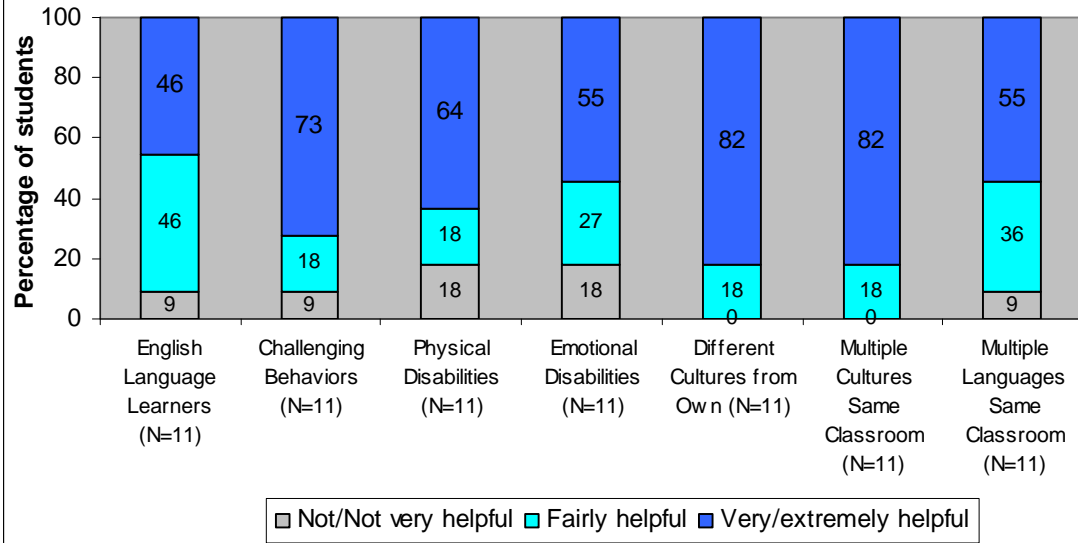
Figure A-44: Impact of Courses on Working with Diverse Groups of Children, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort at Mills College
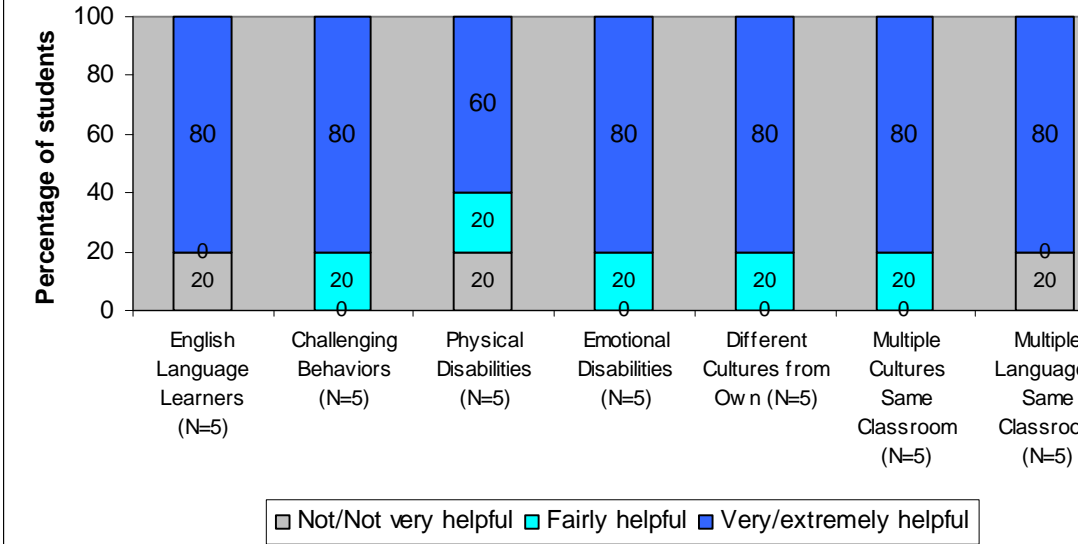
Figure A-45: Impact of Courses on Working with Diverse Groups of Children, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort at San Francisco State University

	English Language Learners (N=24)	Challenging Behaviors (N=25)	Physical Disabilities (N=23)	Emotional Disabilities (N=25)	Different Cultures from Own (N=25)	Multiple Cultures Same Classroom (N=25)	Multiple Languages Same Classroom (N=24)
Very/extremely helpful	92	56	44	56	84	84	88
Fairly helpful	8	24	44	32	8	12	8
Not/Not very helpful	0	20	13	12	8	4	4

Legend: ☐ Not/Not very helpful ☐ Fairly helpful ☐ Very/extremely helpful
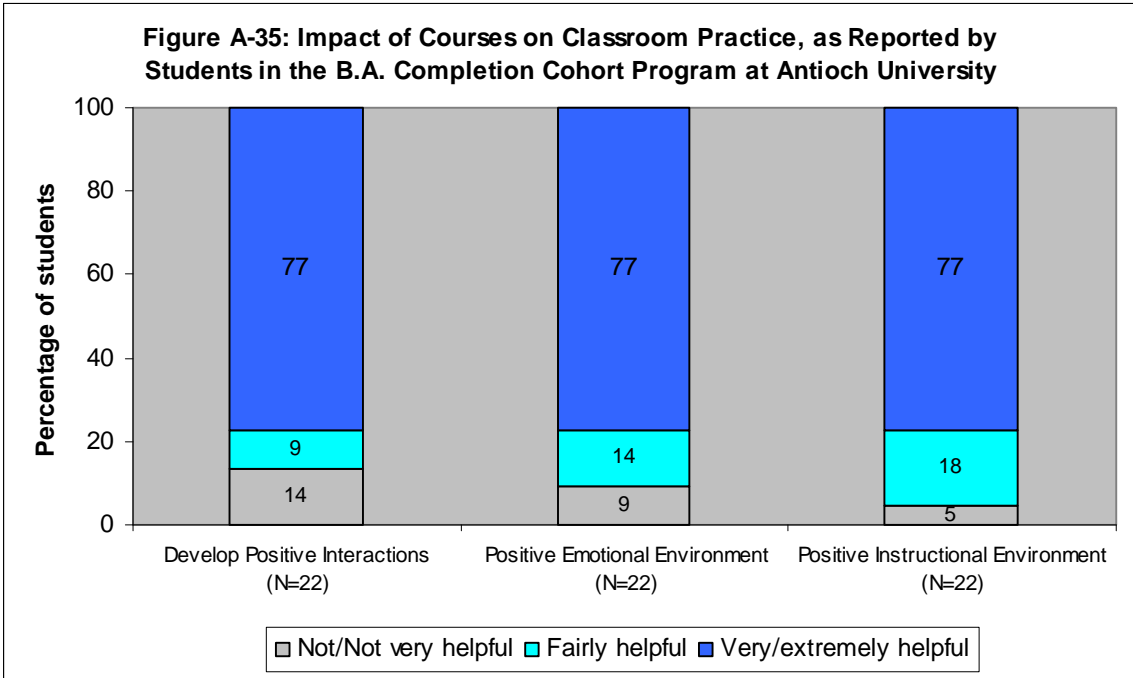
Figure A-46: Impact of Courses on Working with Diverse Groups of Children, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort at San Jose State University

	English Language Learners (N=25)	Challenging Behaviors (N=28)	Physical Disabilities (N=28)	Emotional Disabilities (N=28)	Different Cultures from Own (N=28)	Multiple Cultures Same Classroom (N=27)	Multiple Languages Same Classroom (N=26)
Very/extremely helpful	76	79	68	86	72	74	69
Fairly helpful	8	14	11	7	18	11	15
Not/Not very helpful	16	7	21	7	11	15	15

Legend: ☐ Not/Not very helpful ☐ Fairly helpful ☐ Very/extremely helpful

Figure A-47: Impact of Courses on Working with Diverse Groups of Children, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort at Antioch University

Percentage of students	English Language Learners (N=22)	Challenging Behaviors (N=22)	Physical Disabilities (N=22)	Emotional Disabilities (N=22)	Different Cultures from Own (N=22)	Multiple Cultures Same Classroom (N=22)	Multiple Languages Same Classroom (N=22)
Very/extremely helpful	68	73	64	59	68	64	55
Fairly helpful	23	27	32	41	23	27	32
Not/Not very helpful	9	0	5	0	9	9	14

Legend: Not/Not very helpful, Fairly helpful, Very/extremely helpful

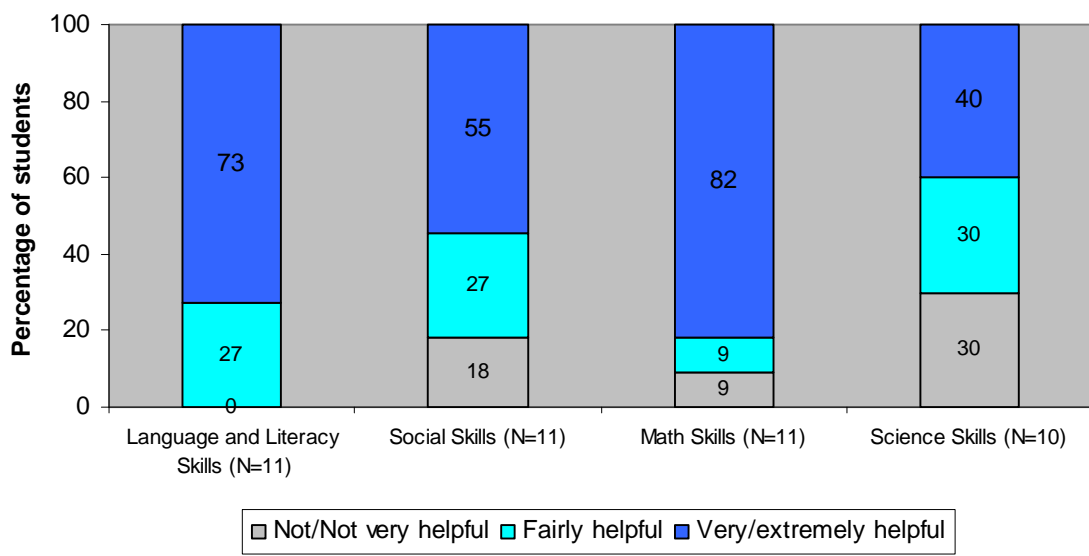## Figure A-48: Impact of Courses on Working with Diverse Groups of Children, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort at the University of La Verne

Percentage of students	English Language Learners (N=11)	Challenging Behaviors (N=11)	Physical Disabilites (N=11)	Emotional Disabilites (N=11)	Different Cultures from Own (N=11)	Multiple Cultures Same Classroom (N=11)	Multiple Languages Same Classroom (N=11)
Very/extremely helpful	46	55	55	64	64	55	46
Fairly helpful	18	18	18	9	0	18	18
Not/Not very helpful	36	27	27	27	36	27	36

Legend: Not/Not very helpful, Fairly helpful, Very/extemely helpful

Figure A-49: Impact of Courses on Working with Families and Staff, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at CSU-East Bay

	Families from Different Cultures from Own (N=11)	Families from Multiple Cultures (N=11)	Families from Multiple Linguistic Backgrounds (N=9)	Co-Workers (N=10)	Directors Only: Improve Instructional Practice of Staff (N=2)	Directors Only: Manage and Supervise Staff (N=2)
Very/extremely helpful	73	73	78	70	50	50
Fairly helpful	27	27	22	10	50	0
Not/Not very helpful	0	0	0	20	0	50

Legend: Not/Not very helpful ▢ Fairly helpful ▢ Very/extremely helpful

Figure A-50: Impact of Courses on Working with Families and Staff, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Mills College

	Families from Different Cultures from Own (N=5)	Families from Multiple Cultures (N=5)	Families from Multiple Linguistic Backgrounds (N=5)	Co-Workers (N=5)	Directors Only: Improve Instructional Practice of Staff (N=3)	Directors Only: Manage and Supervise Staff (N=3)
Very/extremely helpful	80	60	60	60	100	67
Fairly helpful	0	40	20	0	0	33
Not/Not very helpful	20	0	20	40	0	0

Legend: Not/Not very helpful ▢ Fairly helpful ▢ Very/extremely helpful

Figure A-51: Impact of Courses on Working with Families and Staff, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Francisco State University
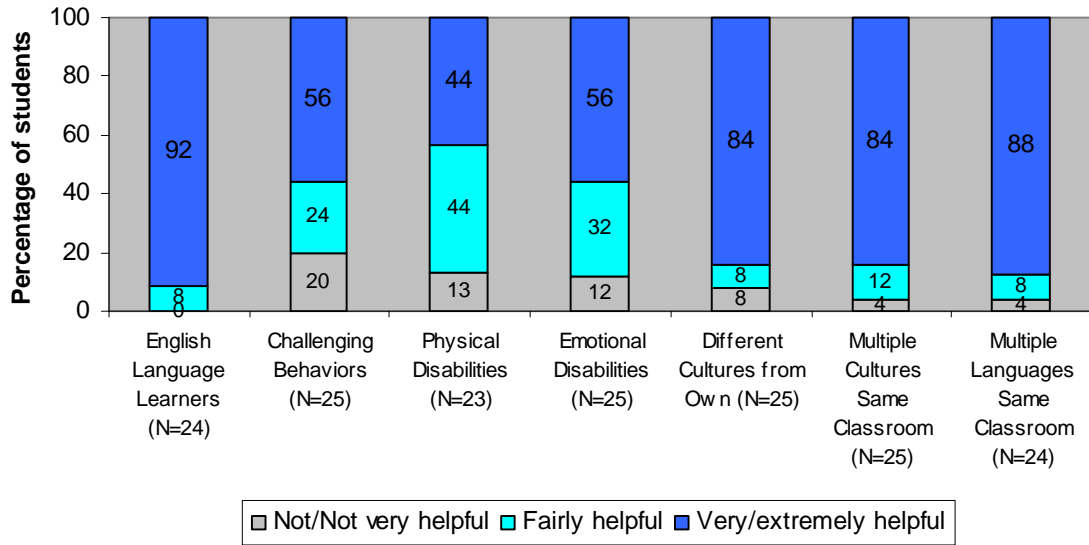

Figure A-52: Impact of Courses on Working with Families and Staff, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Jose State University
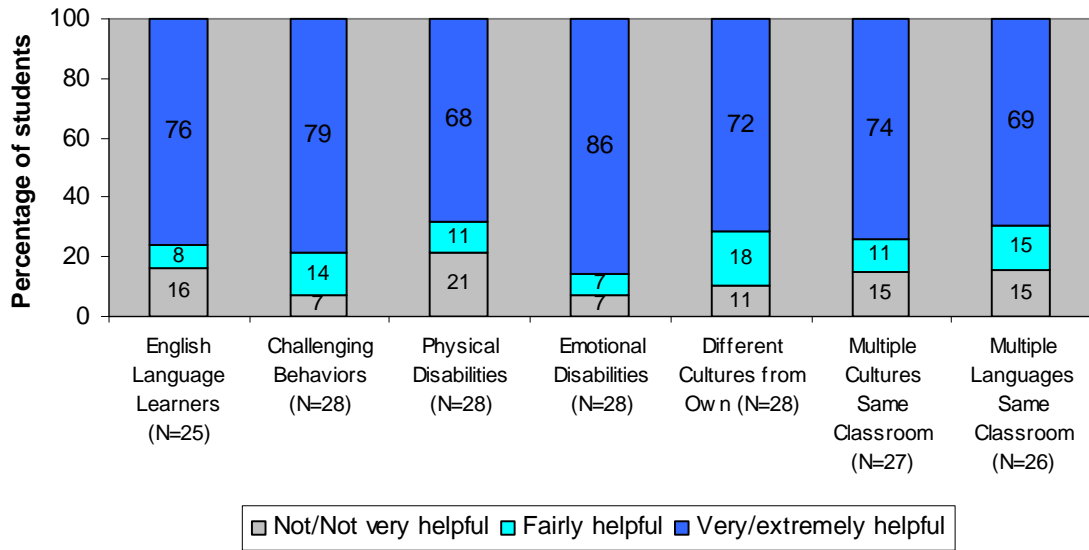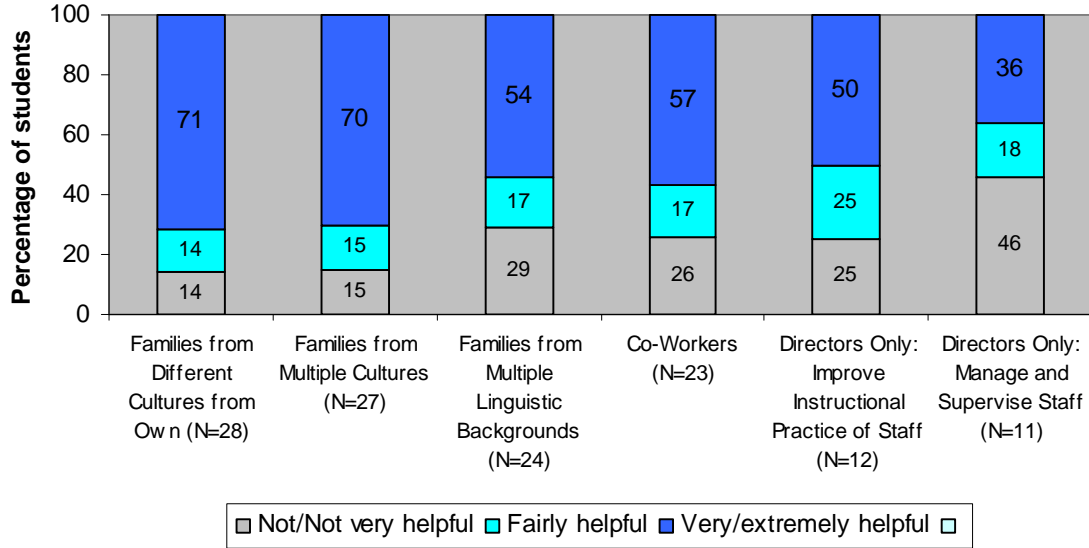
Figure A-53: Impact of Courses on Working with Families and Staff, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Antioch University

Percentage of students

Category	Not/Not very helpful	Fairly helpful	Very/extremely helpful
Families from Different Cultures from Own (N=22)	14	14	73
Families from Multiple Cultures (N=22)	14	18	68
Families from Multiple Linguistic Backgrounds (N=22)	18	23	59
Co-Workers (N=22)	9	14	77
Directors Only: Improve Instructional Practice of Staff (N=10)	0	20	80
Directors Only: Manage and Supervise Staff (N=10)	10	10	80

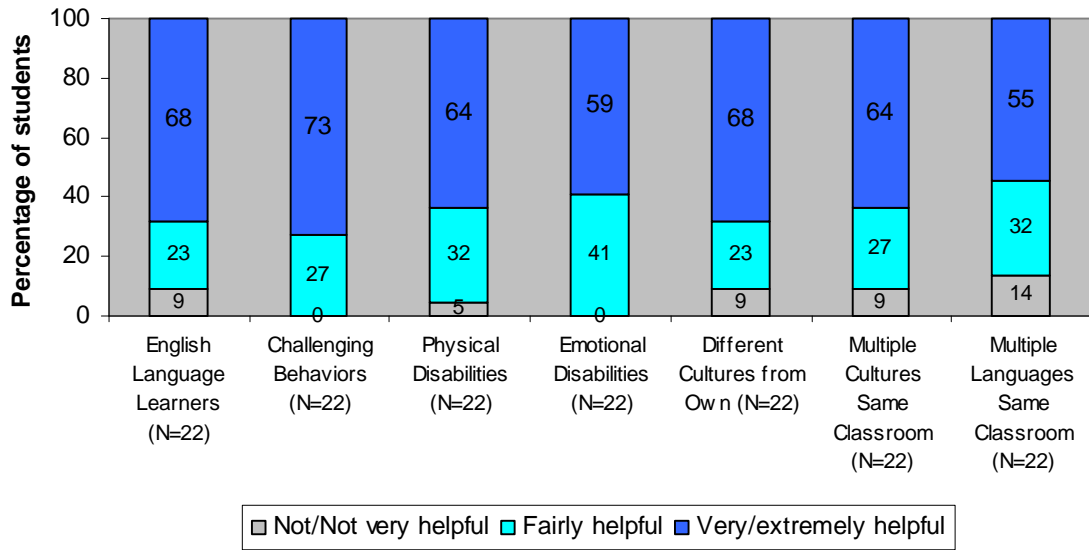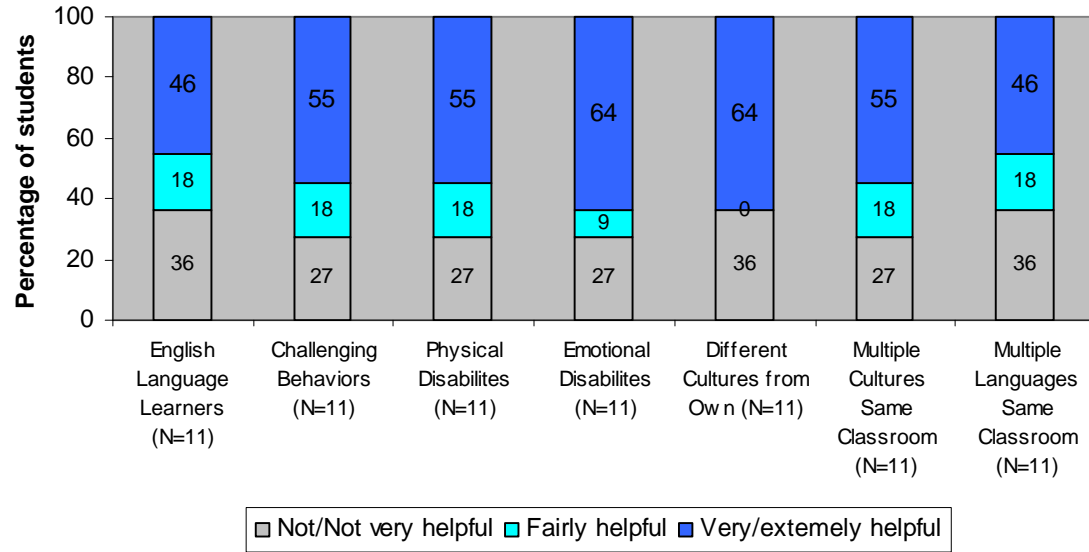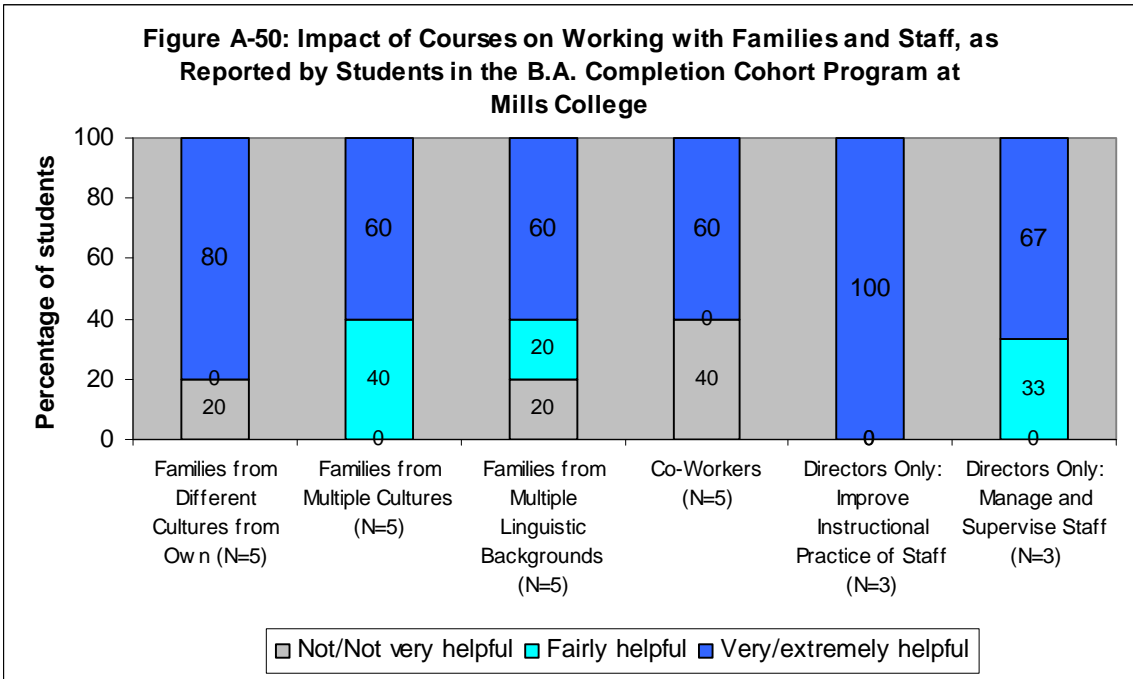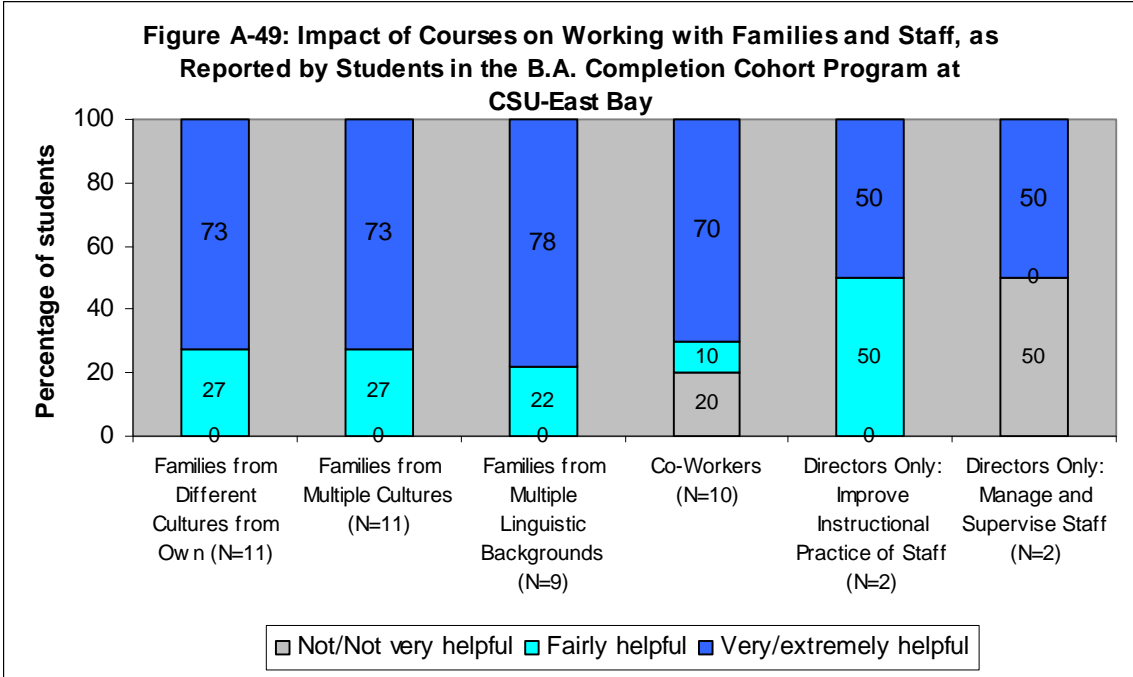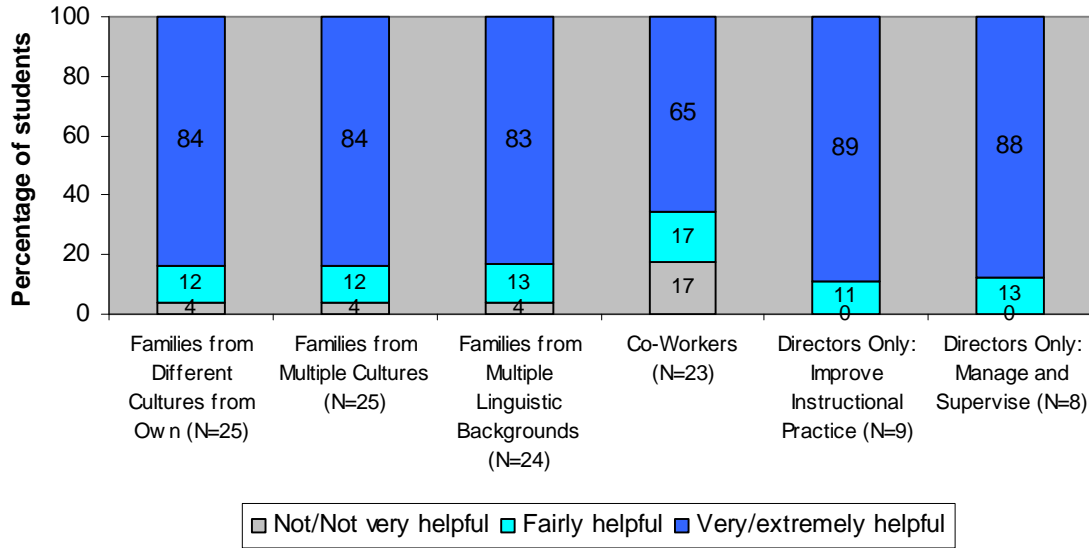□ Not/Not very helpful □ Fairly helpful ■ Very/extremely helpful □
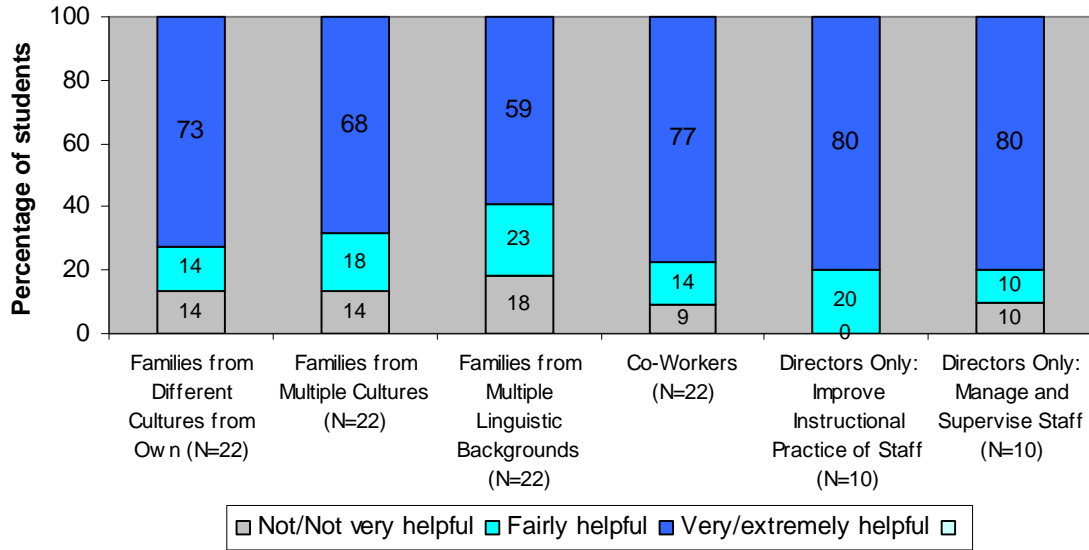
Figure A-54: Impact of Courses on Working with Families and Staff, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at the University of La Verne

Percentage of students

Category	Not/Not very helpful	Fairly helpful	Very/extremely helpful
Families from Different Cultures from Own (N=11)	36	9	55
Families from Multiple Cultures (N=11)	27	27	46
Families from Multiple Linguistic Backgrounds (N=11)	27	36	36
Co-Workers (N=10)	40	20	40
Directors Only: Improve Instructional Practice of Staff (N=3)	33	0	67
Directors Only: Manage and Supervise Staff (N=3)	33	33	33

□ Not/Not very helpful □ Fairly helpful ■ Very/extremely helpful □

Figure A-55: The Educational Environment at Students' Workplaces, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at CSU-East Bay

	All the Time	Some of the time/Once in a while	Never
Financial assistance for workshops (N=10)	20	60	20
Supervisor helps with homework (N=9)	11	44	44
Supervisor helps implement what learned in class (N=8)	50	38	13
Paid time to prepare classes for children (N=10)	60	10	30
Scheduled time to talk with co-workers about the children (N=10)	50	20	30

Figure A-56: The Educational Environment at Students' Workplaces, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Mills College

	All the Time	Some of the time/Once in a while	Never
Financial assistance for workshops (N=4)	25	50	25
Supervisor helps with homework (N=4)	0	50	50
Supervisor helps implement what learned in class (N=4)	75	0	25
Paid time to prepare classes for children (N=4)	100	0	0
Scheduled time to talk with co-workers about the children (N=4)	50	50	0

Figure A-57: The Educational Environment at Students' Workplaces, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Francisco State University
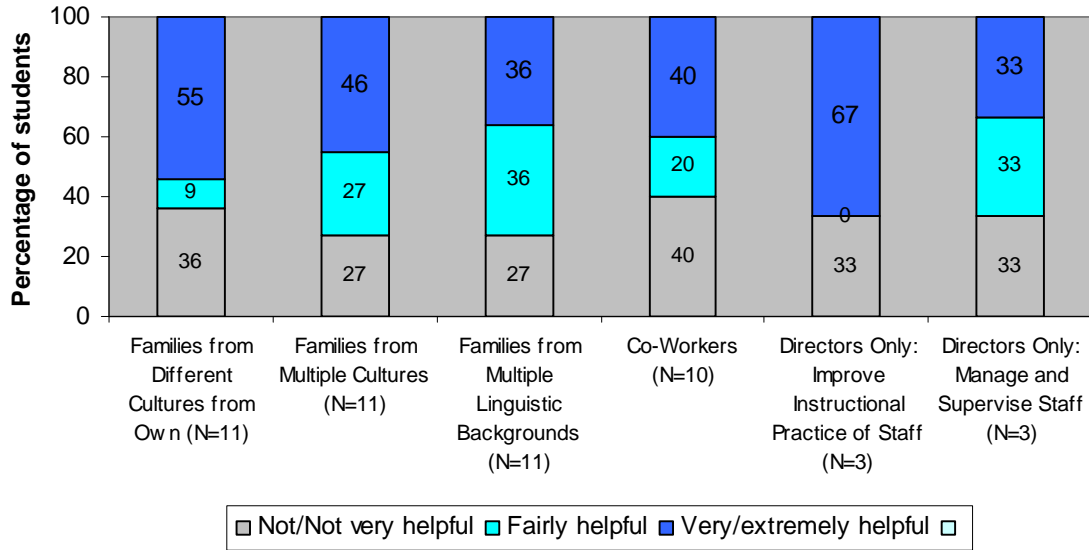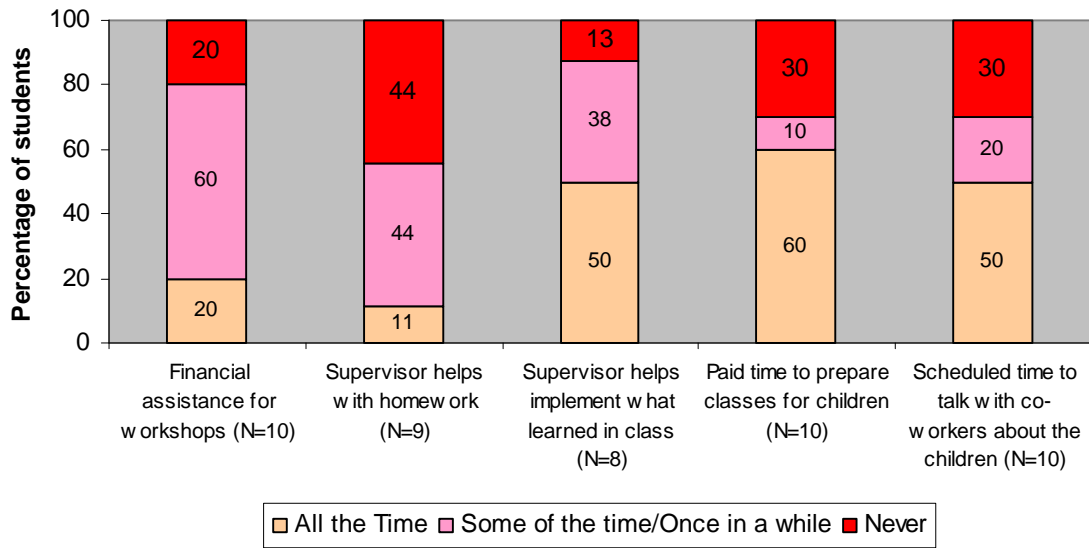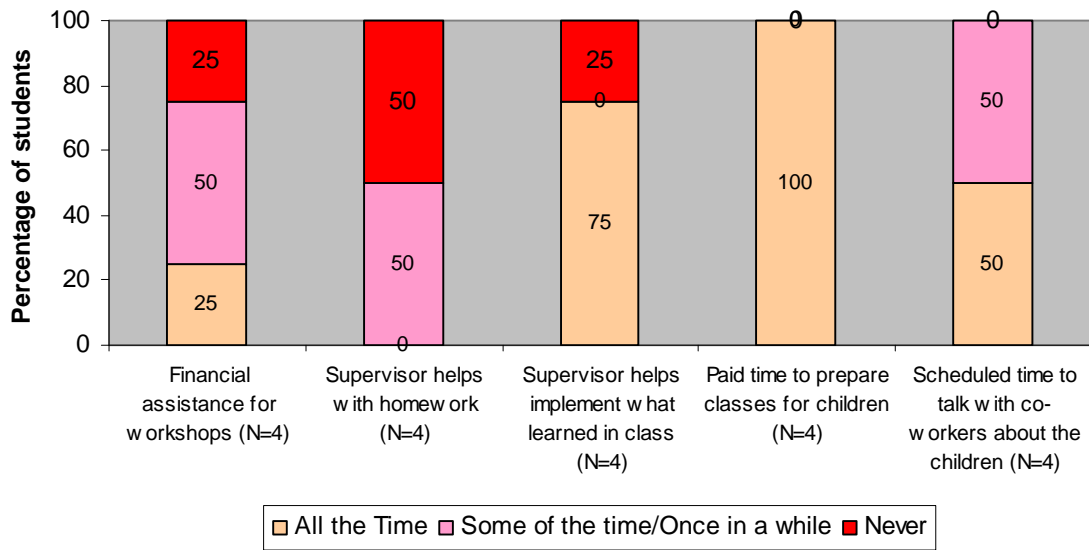
Percentage of students

Category	All the Time	Some of the time/Once in a while	Never
Financial assistance for workshops (N=21)	38	29	33
Supervisor helps with homework (N=21)	19	10	71
Supervisor helps implement what learned in class (N=22)	55	23	23
Paid time to prepare classes for children (N=20)	25	20	55
Scheduled time to talk with co-workers about the children (N=21)	38	43	19

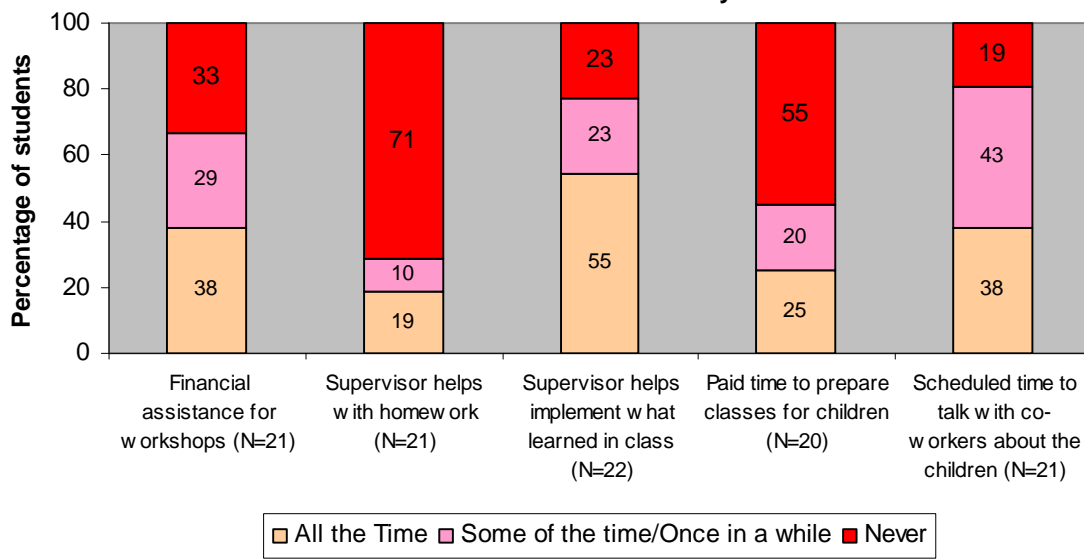Legend: ☐ All the Time ☐ Some of the time/Once in a while ■ Never

Figure A-58: The Educational Environment at Students' Workplaces, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Jose State University

Percentage of students

Category	All the Time	Some of the time/Once in a while	Never
Financial assistance for workshops (N=22)	41	46	14
Supervisor helps with homework (N=22)	32	27	41
Supervisor helps implement what learned in class (N=22)	59	23	18
Paid time to prepare classes for children (N=22)	73	18	9
Scheduled time to talk with co-workers about the children (N=23)	61	22	17

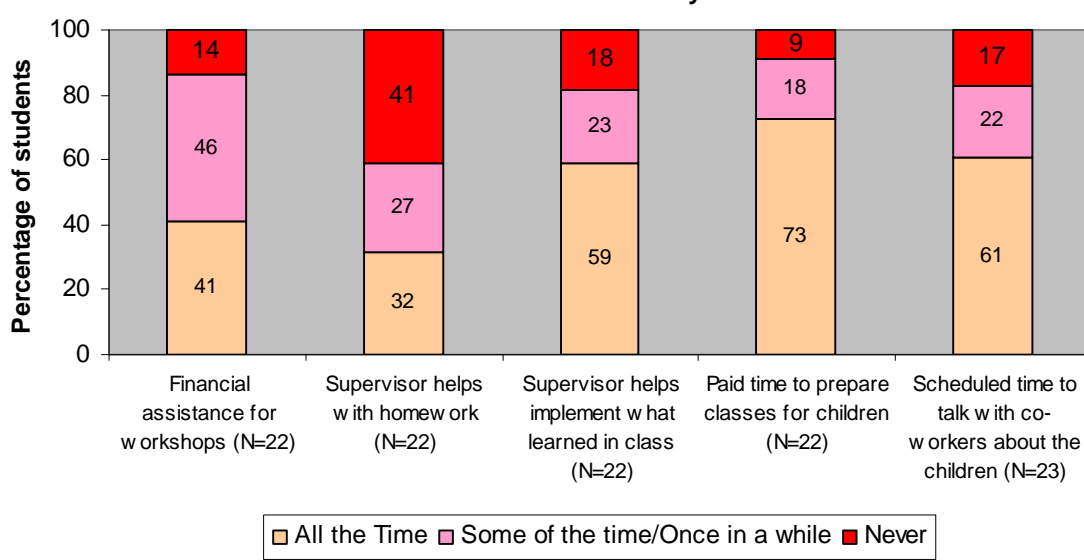Legend: ☐ All the Time ☐ Some of the time/Once in a while ■ Never

Figure A-59: The Educational Environment at Students' Workplaces, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Antioch University
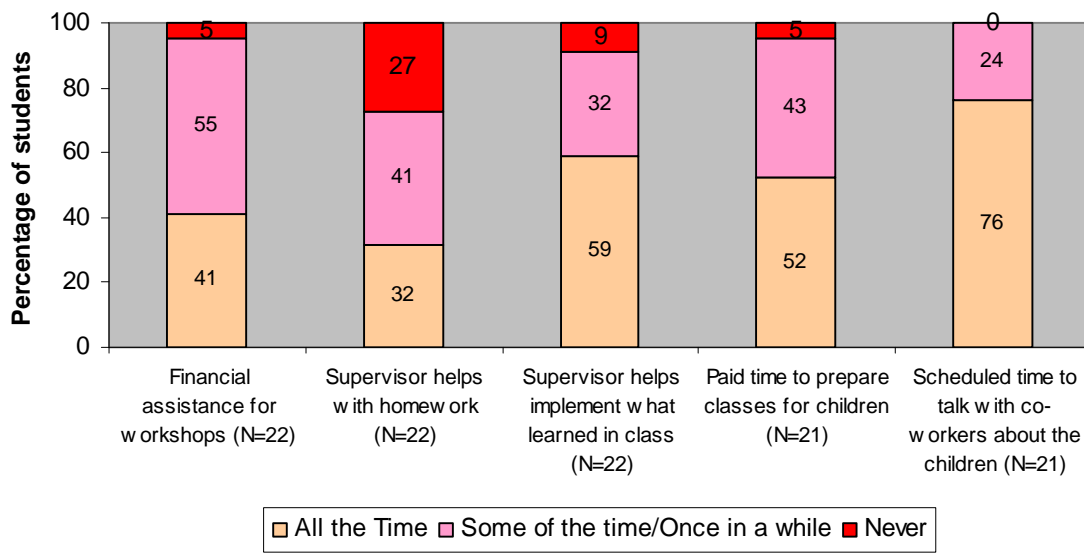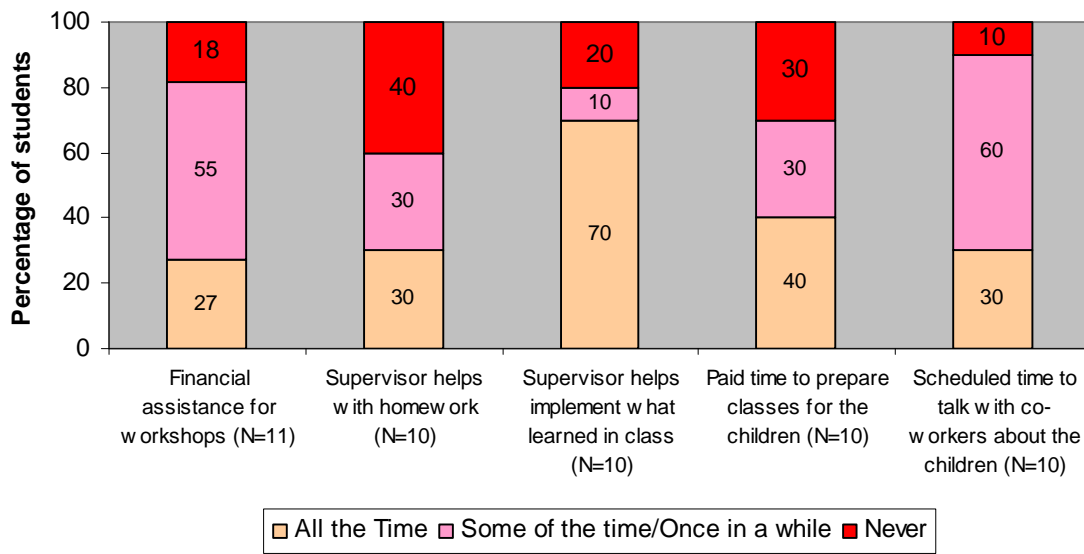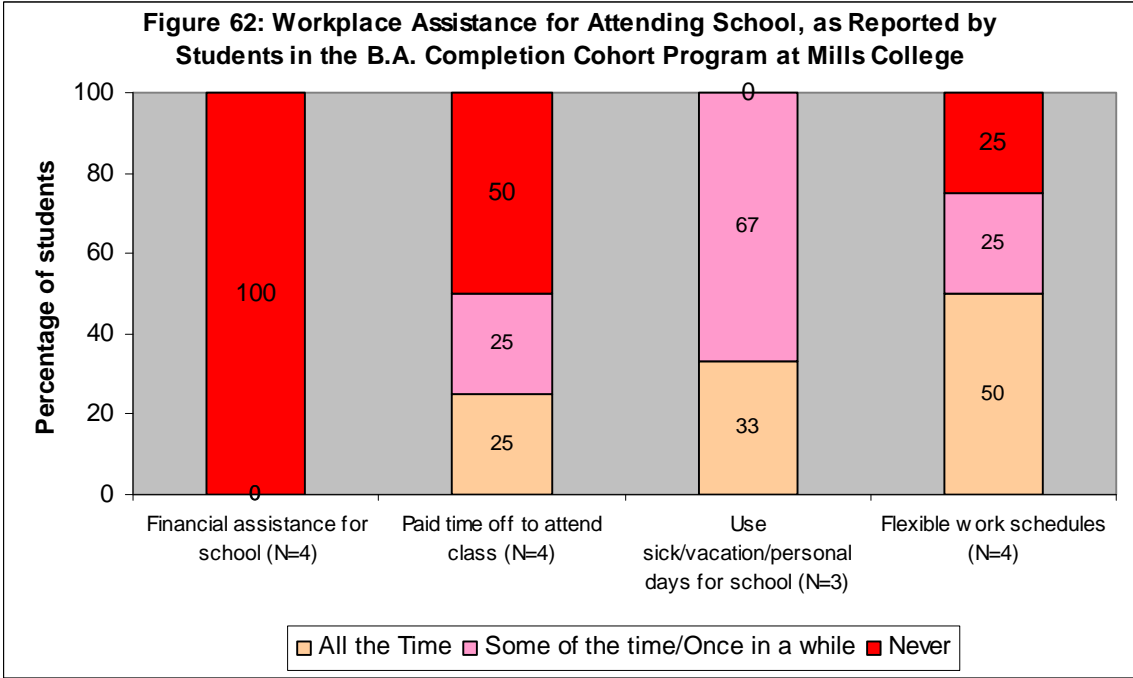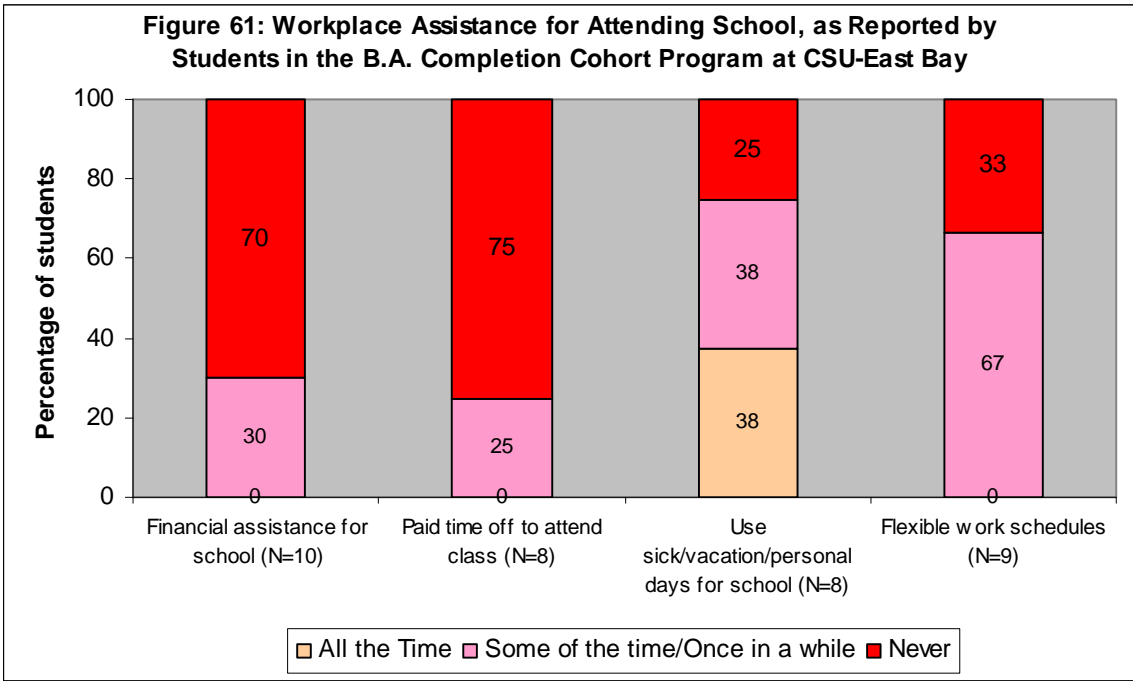
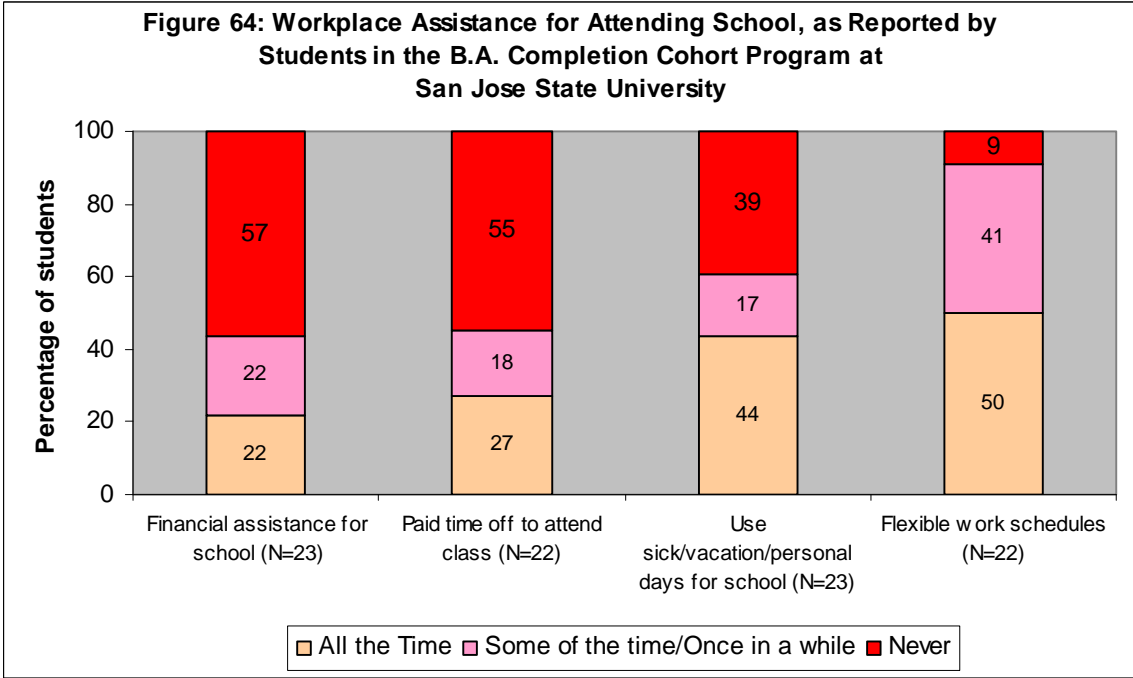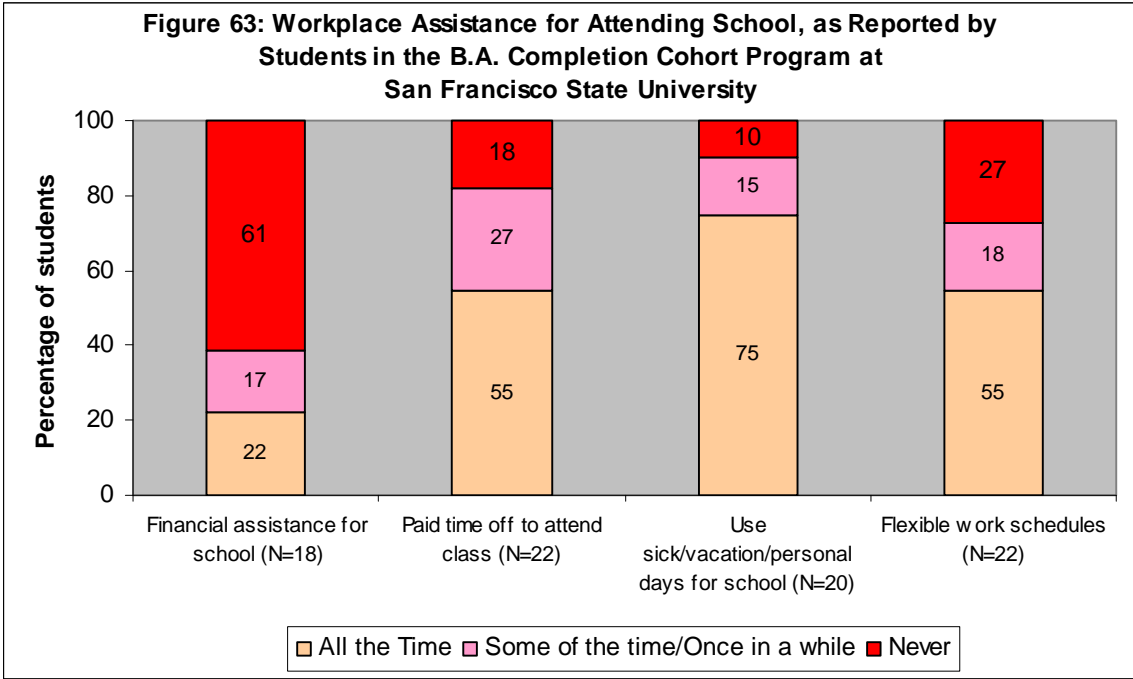| Category	All the Time	Some of the time/Once in a while	Never
Financial assistance for workshops (N=22)	41	55	5
Supervisor helps with homework (N=22)	32	41	27
Supervisor helps implement what learned in class (N=22)	59	32	9
Paid time to prepare classes for children (N=21)	52	43	5
Scheduled time to talk with co-workers about the children (N=21)	76	24	0

Percentage of students

Figure A-60: The Educational Environment at Students' Workplaces, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at the University of La Verne

Category	All the Time	Some of the time/Once in a while	Never
Financial assistance for workshops (N=11)	27	55	18
Supervisor helps with homework (N=10)	30	30	40
Supervisor helps implement what learned in class (N=10)	70	10	20
Paid time to prepare classes for the children (N=10)	40	30	30
Scheduled time to talk with co-workers about the children (N=10)	30	60	10

Percentage of students

Figure 61: Workplace Assistance for Attending School, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at CSU-East Bay

Figure 62: Workplace Assistance for Attending School, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Mills College

Figure 63: Workplace Assistance for Attending School, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Francisco State University

Figure 64: Workplace Assistance for Attending School, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at San Jose State University

Figure 65: Workplace Assistance for Attending School, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at Antioch University

Figure 66: Workplace Assistance for Attending School, as Reported by Students in the B.A. Completion Cohort Program at the University of La Verne

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