Preface

Integral to the global market, education is the key to competitiveness. Now more than ever, the shifting needs of a changing economy require a highly-skilled and well-educated workforce. Yet still, the collateral effects of a poor-quality K-12 education pose a serious problem for students who wish to pursue higher education. Students starting their college journeys increasingly require multiple areas of remediation prior to the ability to start coursework for their declared major. Stigma, frustration and life responsibilities force some students who are engaged in developmental education to drop out before even starting their intended programs; for those who do persist, often the process can take as long as six years to obtain an undergraduate degree.

The obstacles that students face during their academic journey are many. The cost of education continues to rise, as evidenced by multiple studies on higher education costs. For example, the average cost of attending a public 4-year institution in the United States was reported to be at least $19,000 during the 2013-2014 academic year (Ginder, Kelly-Reid, & Mann, 2015). It is not a surprise then that approximately 30 percent of students who stopped attending college reported financial issues as the reason for no longer attending college (Ross et al., 2012). For students with financial issues who attempt to persist in college, cost may lengthen their time in school.

In addition to the varied costs associated with tuition and fees, living and transportation expenses, as well as the cost associated with course materials, burden students. The cost of higher education has continued to increase with students unable to afford even the basic necessities of a college student; this cost affects multiple socioeconomic statuses, including race, gender and class. Due to the increase in tuition, fees and textbooks, students are more often opting not to purchase a textbook for college courses, believing that no textbook would hurt their grade for the course (Allie, 2014). Despite knowing it could be detrimental to their college success, students are voluntarily (and involuntarily) opting not to acquire the most necessary resources.

Furthermore, of the full-time, first time students seeking a bachelor’s degree in a 4-year institution in the United States in 2008, only approximately 60 percent
completed a bachelor’s or equivalent degree within 6 years at the institution where they began their studies. In contrast, at 2-year institutions, 36 percent of full-time, first time students enrolled in 2010 would complete their degree or equivalent in 4 years (Ginder, Kelly-Reid, & Mann, 2015). Concerns about costs and completion rates are not limited to the United States; college completion around the world is also a concern, as evidenced by a rise in research on the topics.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) collected education data from various (member?) countries. In the United States, 44 percent of 25 to 34 year-olds have a university-level degree, as compared to the OECD average of 39 percent. When looking at the education of adults of various countries, the OECD average falls to 22 percent, with Canada at 40 percent and the United States at 36 percent. The percentage of adults with a tertiary or university level education has increased by 11 percent. Luxembourg and Ireland experienced the greater attainments, increasing by 21 and 18 percent, respectively (OECD, 2014). It is evident that there is substantial work to do when, on average, less than a quarter of adults in the world have completed a tertiary or university level education.

In recent years, however, specially-designed accelerated opportunity initiatives have begun to achieve a degree of success towards improving and expediting the remediation process and to assist students in completing their university level credentials. Examples of this can be seen in adult education and high school students who, using contextualized learning, take remediation or high school courses while co-enrolled in college credit-bearing classes. Yet another initiative can be found in better communications with students through social media and other applications to enhance the learning environment. This book seeks to analyze the newest initiatives in various educational institutions around the world, and in so doing, adds globalized practices and models to the current body of research.

Accelerated opportunities in education are those that attempt to shorten the timeframe by which a higher education degree is completed, thus improving the timeliness to completion and other measures of graduation rates. While the goal of these types of models and practices is the overall accelerated completion of the higher education program, some may involve only a segment of the student’s academic journey, as, models and practices address remedial education alone, while others contend with the assessment of course objectives. Herein, the chapters propose a variety of efforts towards reaching the student, adapting to the needs of the student, and providing an opportunity for timely completion of the college credentials.

University programs have seen success in models involving contextualized learning, a method by which a student is exposed to remediation while attempting the college level work (Bilican, Cakiroglu, & Oztekin, 2015). For example, algebra concepts can be contextualized to be combined with an accounting course, so both sets of concepts and learning objectives are being taught at the same time. This
premise can also be combined with prior learning assessment (PLA), which is a method for evaluating student learning to provide college credit. Credit is awarded for college-level knowledge gained from experience and not for the experience itself. This is often done via exit exams or evaluation of industry based credentials. In the end, college-level learning is validated through PLA when learners prove their mastery of the knowledge, skills, competencies, and abilities in a specific area of study offered by the college (West, 2015). Both of these methods help students complete coursework at an accelerated rate. Herein, other accelerated opportunity models are also reviewed.

In addition to methods for acceleration that focus on academic affairs, student services also play a vital role in the success of students in completing their degree program. Personalized support for students on- and off-campus might just be the bridge that helps students complete tasks and courses they might not otherwise complete (Galardi, 2012). More of these initiatives can be seen in the enactment of student success coaches and quality academic advising models that promote continuous progression in the student’s educational program. By providing a support mechanism for students, the overarching goal of completing the course, and ultimately the degree, is being targeted.

The administration of the degree programs is another key factor attributing to the success of accelerated opportunities in education. When an academic plan for the chosen program of study is developed early on, college students are more likely to complete a degree in a timely fashion than others who do not have such a plan. This means that the college administration must have a clear road map of the courses in the academic program so that students know what courses they should take to effectively complete a credential (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015). In essence, the way the college administration present courses to students and how those courses are scheduled can either help or hurt a student’s progression through the academic program.

Knowing that college timely completion is an issue, various methods of accelerated opportunities are explored. The objective of this publication is to provide a series of much-needed guidelines and frameworks that help to address the most critical challenges facing higher-education today, including the establishment of state- and campus-level goals; the universalization of student progress and success metrics; the reduction of degree and certificate completion-times; the broadening of curricular entry/exit points, and the overall need for radical transformation of the remediation process. Ultimately, this publication seeks to reveal models and practices that ensure all students can earn the college credentials they desire in a timely fashion, and moreover, that those students are properly equipped to meet the ever-evolving needs of today’s workforce.
ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The book is organized into ten chapters spanning various topics and experiences from educators located all over the world. A brief description of each of the chapters follows:

Chapter 1 combines the related strains of contextualized curriculum design, assessment, perceptions of value and job readiness since the relationship between curriculum and value (in light of job readiness) remains somewhat under-researched. Job readiness is a major part of curriculum development, however, the courses taken within a program of study are often undervalued by the students. The intent of the study is to bridge the gap of value by drawing from the various implications of student perceptions of value and address how curriculum design can enhance this sense of value for the students. This chapter tells the tale of a case study spanning two years’ worth of data and analysis.

Chapter 2 intends to provide background and logistics for development of Success Coaching programming. The retention rate for freshman students at the University of New Orleans in 2013-2014 was around 68 percent with retention being the student returning the following year. The 68 percent retention displayed by the University’s freshman cohort was below that of the state of Louisiana and the United States. The retention rate for returning freshmen for the state of Louisiana was 73 percent, but for the U.S., 77 percent. This chapter explores the case study of the Success Coaching Retention program and its successes and challenges. In addition, it determines methods for creating individualized programs and services to increase retention in institutions of higher education.

Chapter 3 expands upon the concept of quality academic advising as it relates to assisting student with staying on track through graduation, as well as the impact of various academic advising interventions on a student’s completion. Quality academic advising is explained and linked to impact on student ability to graduate with a positive undergraduate experience. However, when the academic advising model is not constructed properly, the adverse effect is true: the student experience potentially affects one’s ability to continue on the academic journey. There is certainly a connection between the quality of academic advising and student persistence in a program of study. These connections as well as methods for assessing the academic advising process are explored and explained in this chapter.

Chapter 4 focuses on issues arising from the educational gap between students who are in an Eynesbury Institute of Business and Technology (EIBT) pathway and those who are not. An EIBT pathway provides the equivalent of a first-year bachelor degree study at a partner university while those who are not in a pathway gain direct entry into an EIBT partner university without the advantage of having to complete the first year of a bachelor degree. Students completing college level work while
in their secondary level education is one of the many ways accelerating education benefits the student in completing a program of study at the university level. The chapter also presents the challenge of bridging that gap by offering a plethora of ‘free’ mandated and/or optional student support activities. These support services are provided to assist students in the pathway be prepared for their transition to the university level work.

Chapter 5 presents the process used to arrive at a purposeful scheduling model. Scheduling, as an administrative function, can help provide students with the courses they need to take when they need to take them. The model combines three separate aspects of scheduling: (1) career and academic advising to ensure the student is in the proper program of study; (2) course and progression sequencing to reduce the number of offerings by specifically target what to offer and when on a rotation basis, and (3) block scheduling that sets aside specific times for grouped courses in order not to have completion within the course offerings. The model was deployed using a blended teaching methodology (a type of course using online and in-person instruction) to make additional classrooms available due to the specific campuses lack of space. In the end, course offerings utilized classroom space more efficiently and increased the enrollment in the course belonging to the programs of study using the model.

Chapter 6 explores the various cultures attending university level coursework and measures student cultural intelligence and satisfaction at a large private university in India. Student satisfaction is an important aspect of students continuing their educational program of study. It also helps administrations learn about the quality of the education students experience in the educational institution. This information can help guide the investigation of various academic and student affairs aspects of the institution. In this large private university in India, the student population is one of the most diverse in Asia. It is in this environment that researchers explore the nationality and gender differences as well as the impact of cultural intelligence and student satisfaction as it related to the global education system.

Chapter 7 evaluates the various technological tools and devices in this digital era that language teachers use for fostering learning through mobile devices. The use of technology to assist faculty and staff in helping students to progress is important to achieve the goal of successful completion of coursework. Teachers combine various techniques and create more opportunities with devices to facilitate learning in language courses. The chapter focuses on three specific aspects for encouraging mobile usage in traditional teaching: (1) creating mobile applications and opportunities for professional growth for teachers; (2) students’ level of comfort in using mobile applications for learning, and (3) scope for integrating mobile technology in a traditional classroom. This accelerated opportunity practice assisted students in being successful in their language coursework thus receiving promotion to the next level.
Preface

Chapter 8 aims to encourage professional development of teachers in global education. Training the faculty who interact with students is an excellent method for ensuring students receive the necessary information for their success. The chapter features the theoretical and practical overview of classroom dialogue and higher-order learning as well as the significance of continuing and teacher professional development. The chapter further argues that encouraging these practices has the potential to improve educational performance and reach strategic goals in global education.

Chapter 9 introduces the impact of globalization on varying educational systems worldwide and the role that social media activities have in addressing educational gaps within the United States, as well as building bridges between cultures. This accelerated opportunity education model uses a new method of communication to provide information and carry on a discussion with students, reaching them where they are often communicating with others already. In addition, the chapter provides a thorough overview of the effects of globalization and social media on the American educational system, giving concrete examples of the use of social media in addressing educational gaps that are unique to the United States’ educational system.

Finally, Chapter 10 explores methods for acquiring college level credit using Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), a process that enables learners to demonstrate what they have learned and translate that learning and experience into college credit. This allows students to receive credit for courses that they can master, rather than spending time demonstrating that they already have mastery over content, as well as spending money on these courses. Both of these, as previously noted, are deterrents to student successful completion of their educational program of study. Also included is an explanation of the multiple benefits of PLA, and how PLA may be implemented in higher education to benefit students, faculty and the institution, in order to achieve the goal of accelerating completion of higher education credentials.

Overall, this publication is meant to provide a wealth of knowledge that is accessible, up-to-date and on par with the sorts of technological and community advances present in the global education system. I invite you to read, discuss, share and learn these new methods in an effort to breathe new life into your own educational system. Should you have any questions, we would be happy to engage with you in helping bring our students to the next level.

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xviii
REFERENCES


