Findings from the Adult Transitions Longitudinal Study

presented by Cristine Smith

Findings from the
Adult Transitions Longitudinal Study



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New England ABE-to-College Transition Project (2000-2008)

- 25 ABE programs partnered with local community colleges.

- Designed and managed by the New England Literacy Resource Center at World Education

- Funded by Nellie Mae Education Foundation

- Foundation for the National College Transition Network (NCTN) and the College Transition Toolkit

College Prep Model

- Stand-alone 14 week program
- 6 hours of instruction and advising per week
- Cohorts of 15-20 students per session
- Participants had high school credentials at time of enrollment
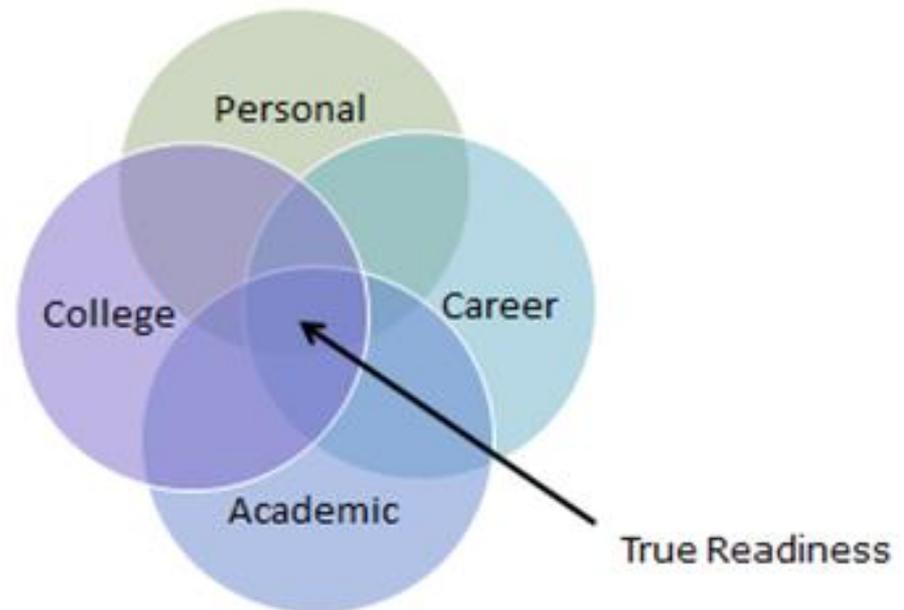
Personal

College

Career

Academic

True Readiness

ATLAS Study

Funded by Nellie Mae Education Foundation

Implemented by:

University of Massachusetts

World Education

New England Literacy Resource Center

National College Transition Network

Special thanks to Laura Gluck, Research Coordinator

Research Questions

- What are the educational outcomes for adult students who participated in the ABE-to-College Transition Program?

- What are the factors that influenced those outcomes?
  - **Individual factors:** *life situation, supports and barriers, motivation, academic skills*
  - **Program factors**: *features of transition program design*
  - **College factors**: *support services, social networks*

Brief facts about ATLAS

- Study started in 2007; data collection ended in 2012

- Tracked 227 participants from 11 ABE-to-College Transition programs in New England

- All participants enrolled in Fall 2007 or Spring 2008 fifteen-week transition course that offered some combination of:
  - Academic skill building (math, writing, computer skills)
  - Career exploration
  - Knowledge about applying to and studying in college
  - Study and life skills

- Panel study: no control or comparison group

ATLAS data

- Yearly survey of all participants:
  - Year 1: background info, educational history, goals, literacy skills
  - Years 2 and 3: college participation and status, supports and hindrances
  - Year 4: college participation and status, supports and hindrances, literacy skills

- Yearly audiotaped interview with 24 randomly selected participants

- 13 videotaped "educational biography" interviews with purposely selected participants

ATLAS data

- Information from transition programs: intake, exit, scores, attendance, program features

- College transcripts for all participants who enrolled in college

- 208 participants completed year 4 survey
- 195 participants completed at least 3 surveys
- 133 participants completed all 4 surveys

Key characteristics of our sample

- 81% female
- 80% U.S. born
- Average age = 36 (range: 21 to 62)
- 81% English as their first language
- 56% European-American, 13% African-American, 8% Hispanic or Latino/a, 16% identified multi-ethnicity
- 44% single, 34% married, 10% domestic partnership, 12% divorced
- 79% young children; 21% no or teenage children

Key characteristics of our sample

- 52% earn less than $250/week, 35% earn less than $500/week
- Annual household income:
  - 7%   = Less than $5,000
  - 24% = $5,000 - $20,000
  - 18% = $20,000 - $29,000
  - 13% = $30,000 - $40,000
  - 29% = Over $40,000
- 46% received GED, 37% traditional h.s. diploma, 17% alternative h.s. diploma
- College goal (as stated in year 1):
  - 61% - Associates degree
  - 18% - Bachelor's degree
  - 16% - Professional certificate
  - 5% - Graduate degree

Six Educational Outcomes

Category	Outcome (Dependent Variable)	N=220, whole sample	% of whole sample	mean, enrolled in college (138)
Trajectory	Never enrolled in college	82	37%	
	Ever enrolled, dropped out	71	32%	
	Still enrolled or graduated at end of study (includes stop outs)	67	31%	
Enroll	2. Completed 3 non-dev ed (transferable) credits	125	57%	
	3. Enrolled in college within 1 year after transition course	103	47%	
Persist	4. Mean semesters completed			4.20
Success	5. Mean credits completed			25.15
	6. Reached "tipping point" (30 transferable credits)	47	22%	

Educational Trajectory

Almost 2/3 of ATLAS participants enrolled in college at some point following their participation in the transition program (n=220).

Trajectory	#	%
Never applied to college	61	28
Applied but not accepted	2	1
Applied and accepted but didn't enroll or start class	19	8
Enrolled but dropped out	71	32
Currently enrolled but stopped out and returned	17	8
Currently enrolled and continuously enrolled since first semester	39	18
Earned an Associates Degree	7	3
Graduated from a vocational or college certificate program (at least 1 year duration)	4	2

Number of semesters completed

For those 138 who ever enrolled in college…

Number of semesters completed	N = 138	%
0	6	4
1	22	16
2-4	51	37
5-9	56	41
10 or 11	3	2

Outcomes:
Number of Developmental Education Classes

Of those who ever enrolled in college for whom we have this data: n=128

Number of DV classes	#	%
0	51	40%
1	28	22%
2	25	19%
3	14	11%
4 or more	10	8%

Mean # dev ed classes taken: 1.39 (s.d.=1.78)
Mean # English dev ed taken: .55 (s.d.=.88)
Mean # Math dev ed taken: .79 (s.d.=1.07)

# Analysis of significant factors influencing educational outcomes: Analytic framework

- Co-variates for **enrollment outcomes** – we controlled for:
  1. Age
  2. Literacy skills
  3. Transition course completion
  4. Being a single parent
  5. Support factors (people,
  6. Hindering factors/barriers
  7. Parents' (ever) college attendance
  8. Type of diploma earned (GED or high school diploma)

Enrollment outcomes: acquire 3 college credits, enroll within one year, overall college trajectory

(Note: added country of origin to these variables when running trajectory)

Analysis of significant factors influencing educational outcomes: Analytic framework

- Co-variates* for **persistence and success outcomes** – we controlled for:
  1. Age
  2. Transition course completion
  3. Having no or older children
  4. Marital status
  5. Support factors
  6. Hindering factors/barriers
  7. Country of origin
  8. Type of diploma (GED or high school diploma)

*Non-traditional college student factors (Sedlacek)

Persistence and success outcomes: number of college semesters, total college credits, reached "tipping point" momentum

# Factors influencing college outcomes
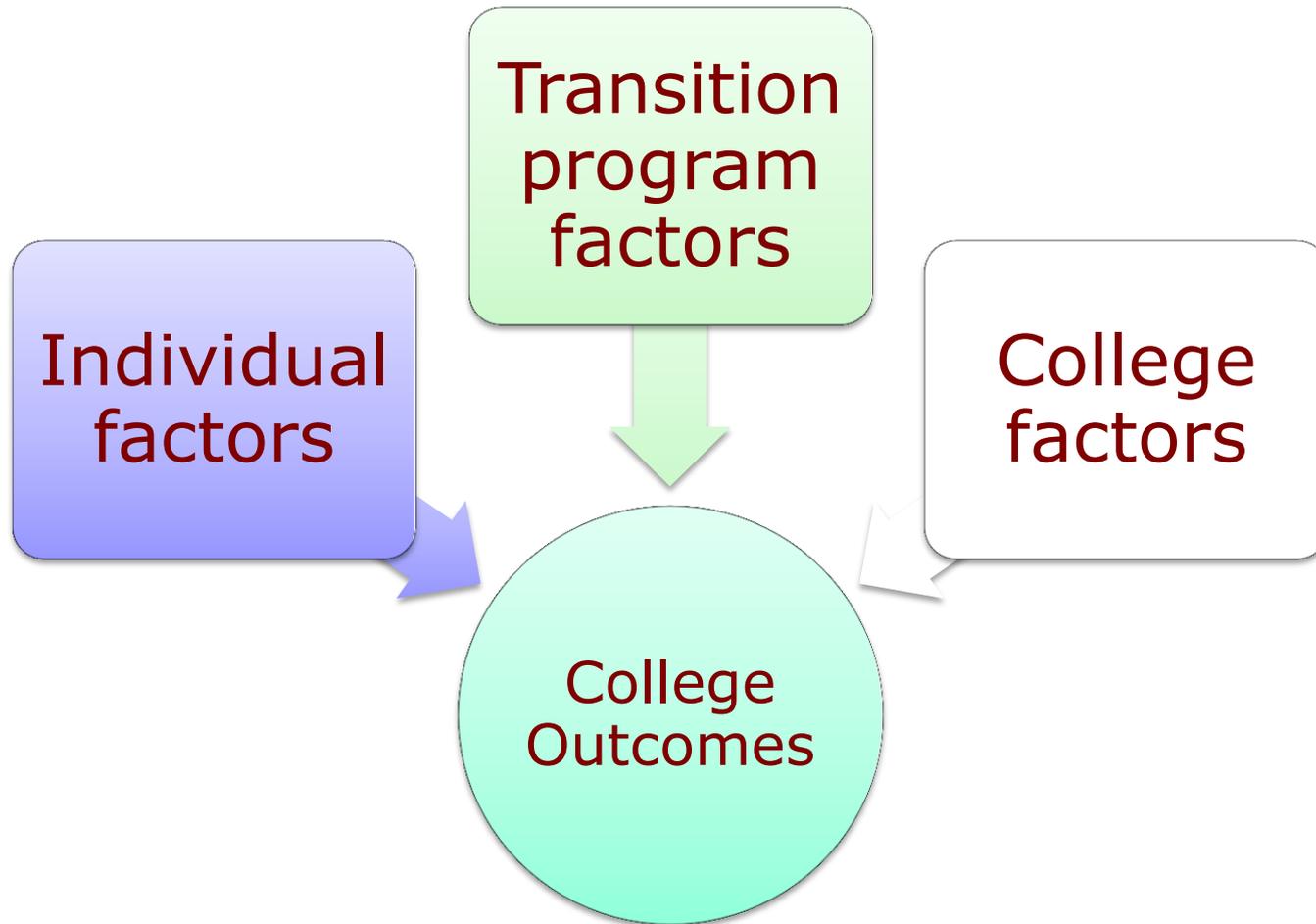
Significant Individual Factors

- Having a spouse or partner
- Health
- Age
- Country of origin
- Arithmetic skills
- Accuplacer scores
- Learning disability
- Completing ABE-to-College transition course
- # hours attending college transition course
- Career planning skills, specific job goals, goal-setting skills
- Support networks

Significant Individual Factor: Spouse or Partner

For those who ever enrolled in college, having a spouse or partner related to persistence (more semesters) and success (more credits)

SEMESTERS
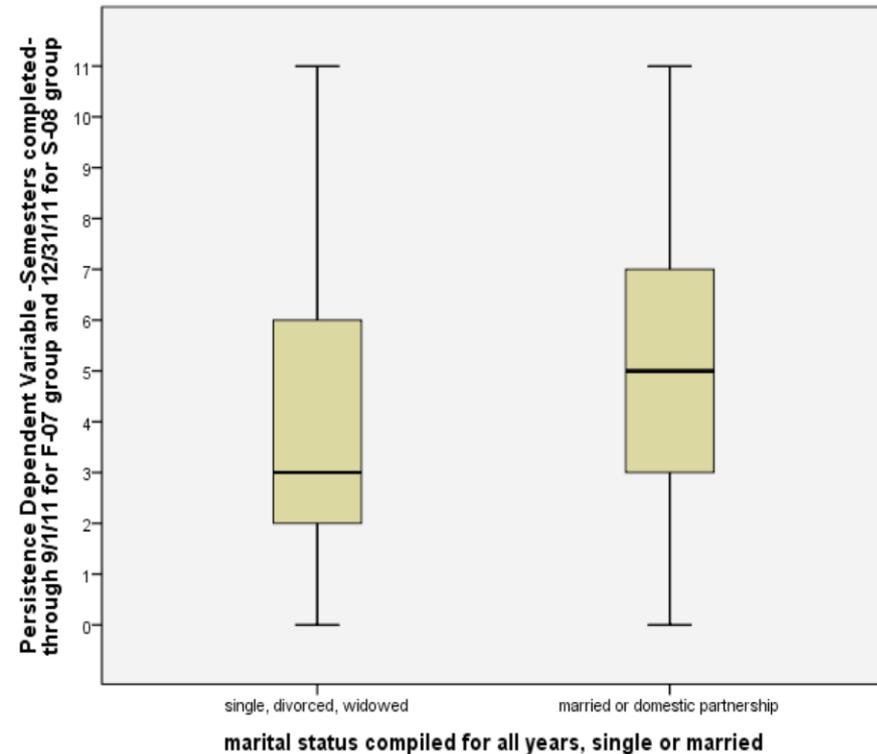
CREDITS
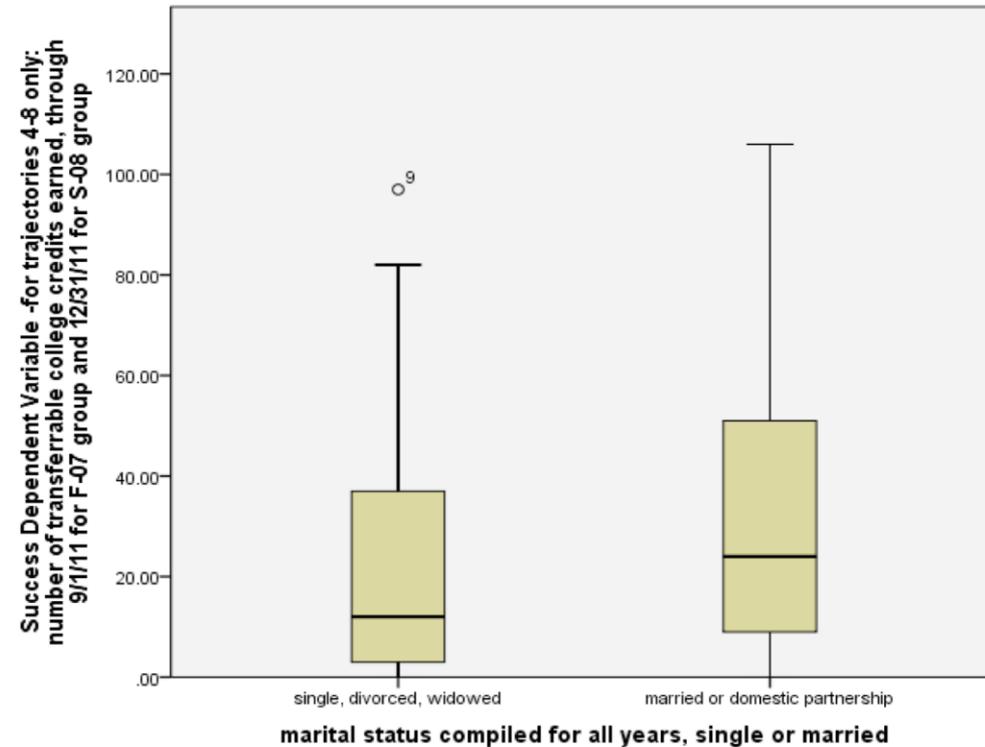
Significant Individual Factor: Health

## Participants who reported poor health

TRAJECTORY
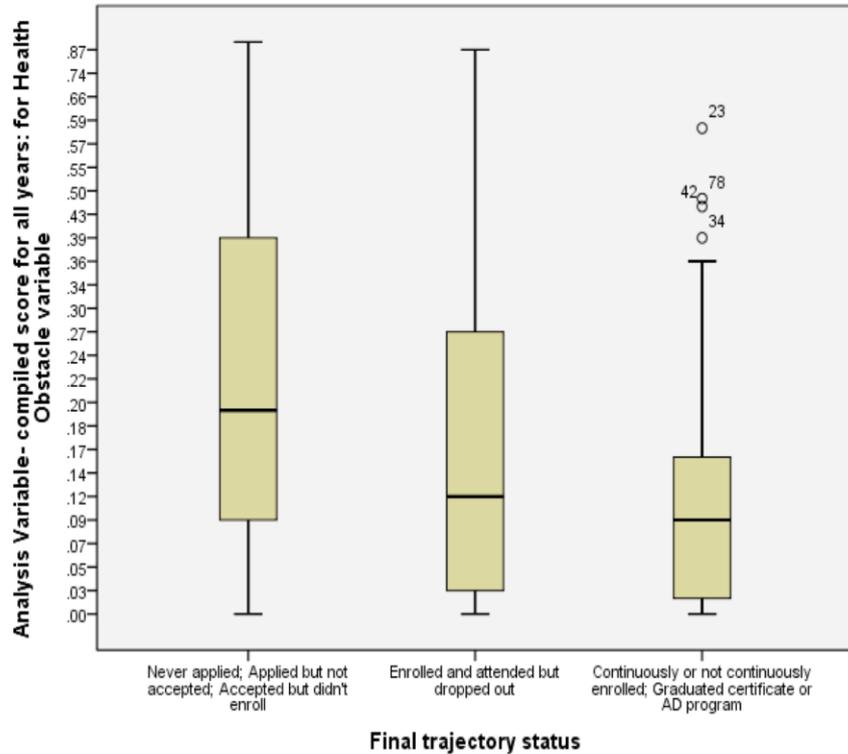
TIPPING POINT
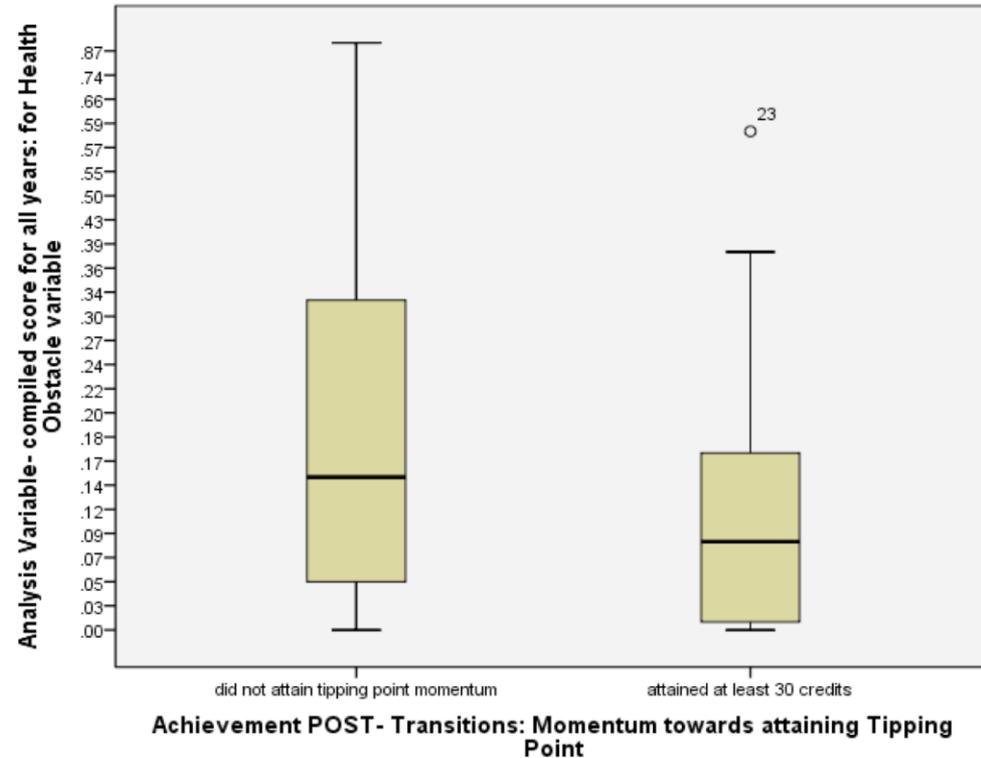
Significant Individual Factor: Age

Older participants less likely to earn 3 college credits:

A student 10 years younger 1 ½ times more likely to complete 3 credits; 20 years younger, twice as likely

Did the participant ever manage to attain at least 3 non-DV credits in college post-transitions?
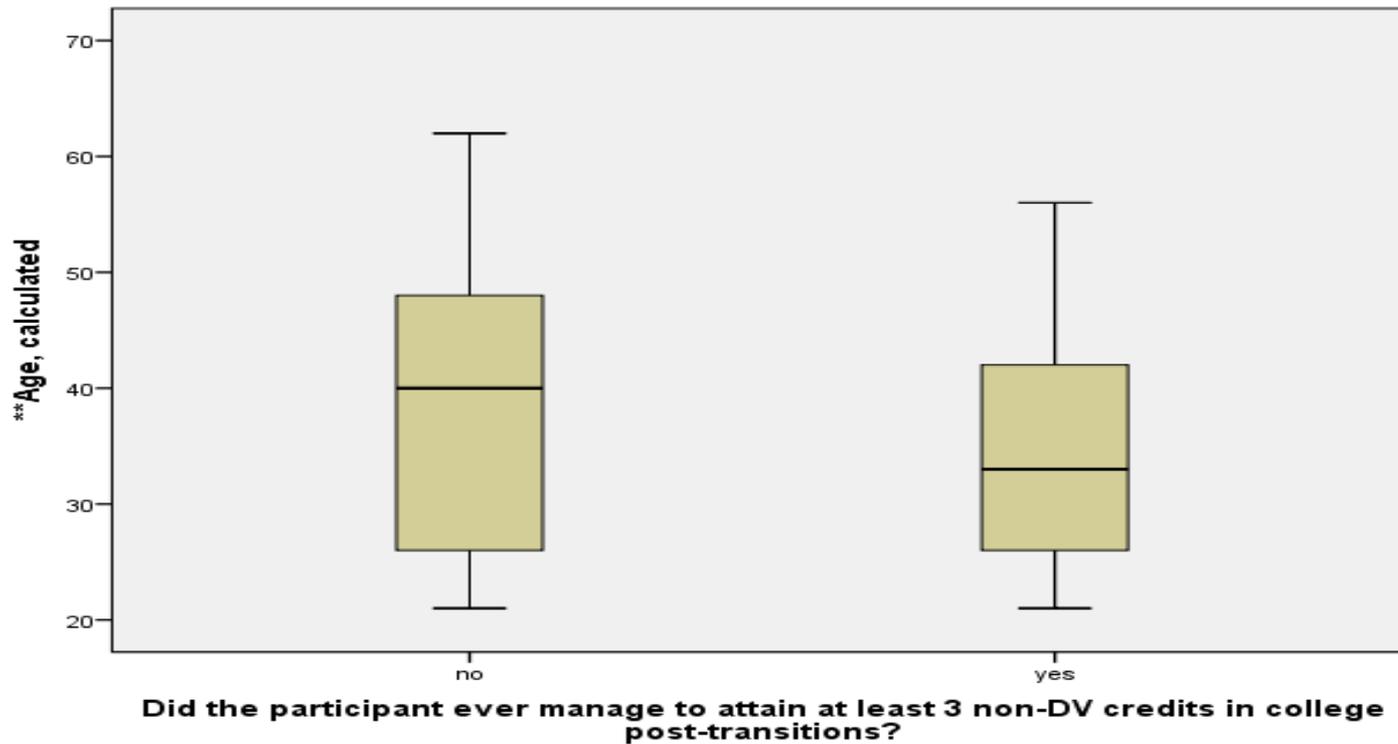
# Significant Individual Factor: Country of Origin

Participants born in other countries more likely to enroll and stay in college

Immigrants more than twice as likely to enroll, and those who enrolled more than twice as likely to stay enrolled than U.S.-born participants.
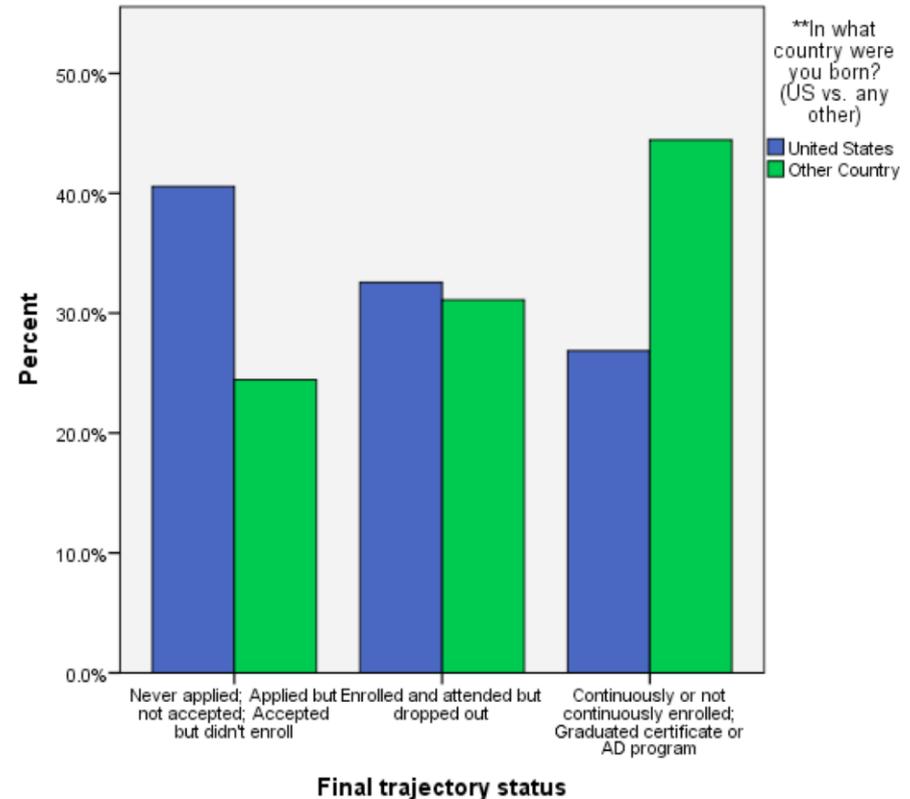
Significant Factors: Arithmetic skills

Higher Accuplacer arithmetic scores at end of transition course related to earning 3 credits

Significant Individual factor: Accuplacer scores

Higher Accuplacer Compiled Score* at end of transition course related to earning 3 credits
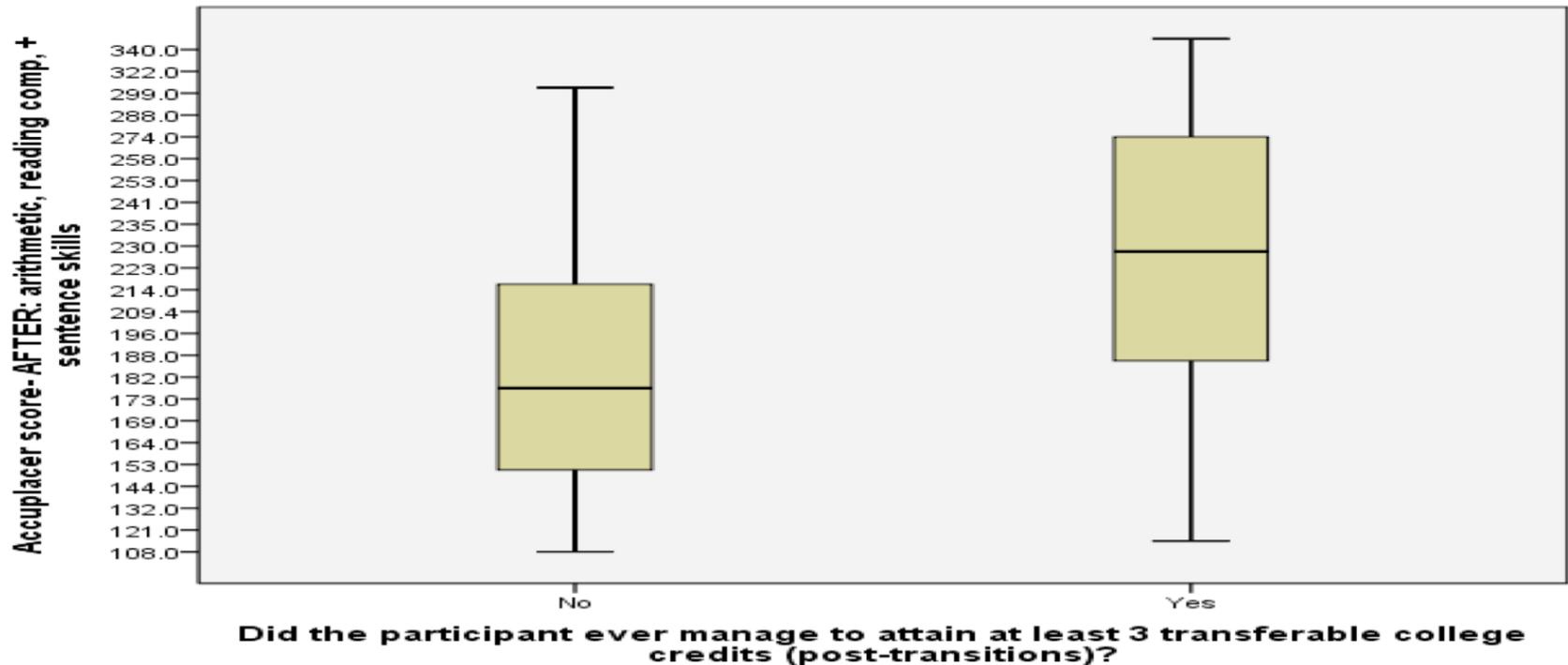
*Compiled score: Arithmetic, sentence skills, reading comprehension

Significant Individual Factor: Accuplacer scores

Change in Accuplacer compiled score by end of transition course related to earning 3 credits
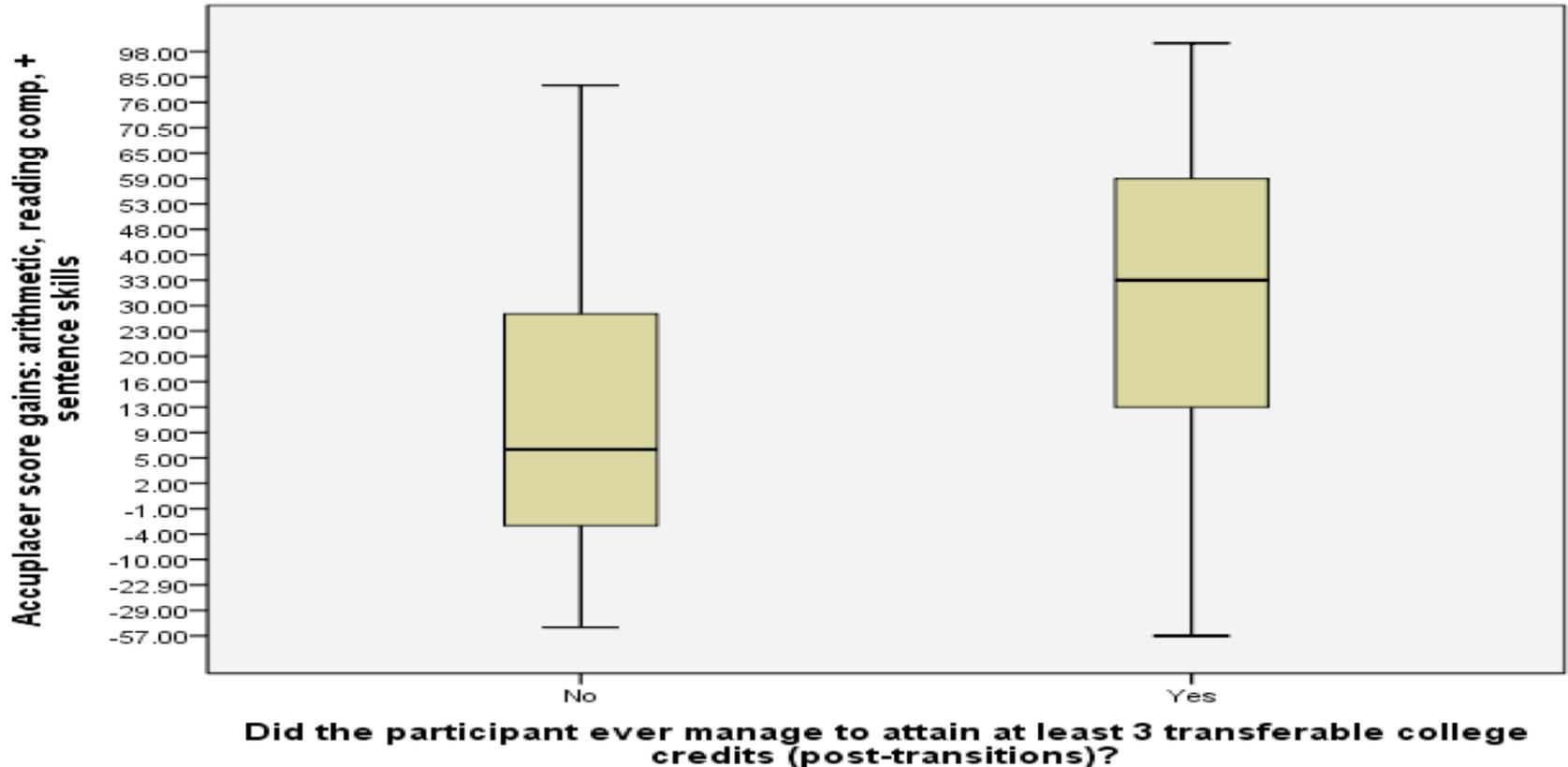
Significant Individual Factor: Accuplacer scores

Change in Accuplacer compiled score by end of transition course related to reaching 30-credit tipping point
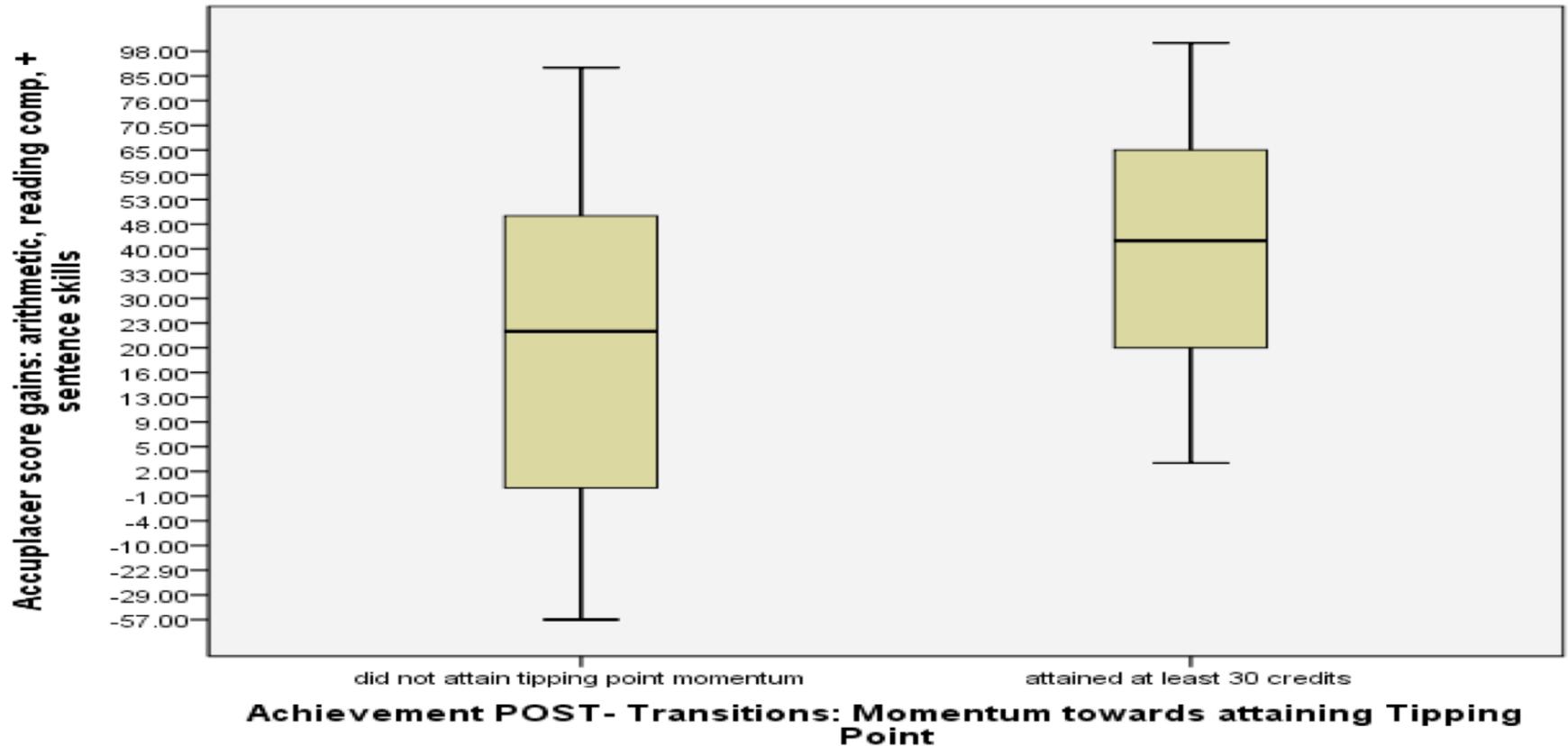
# Significant Individual Factor: Learning Disability

Not having a learning disability made participants three times more likely to acquire 3 credits
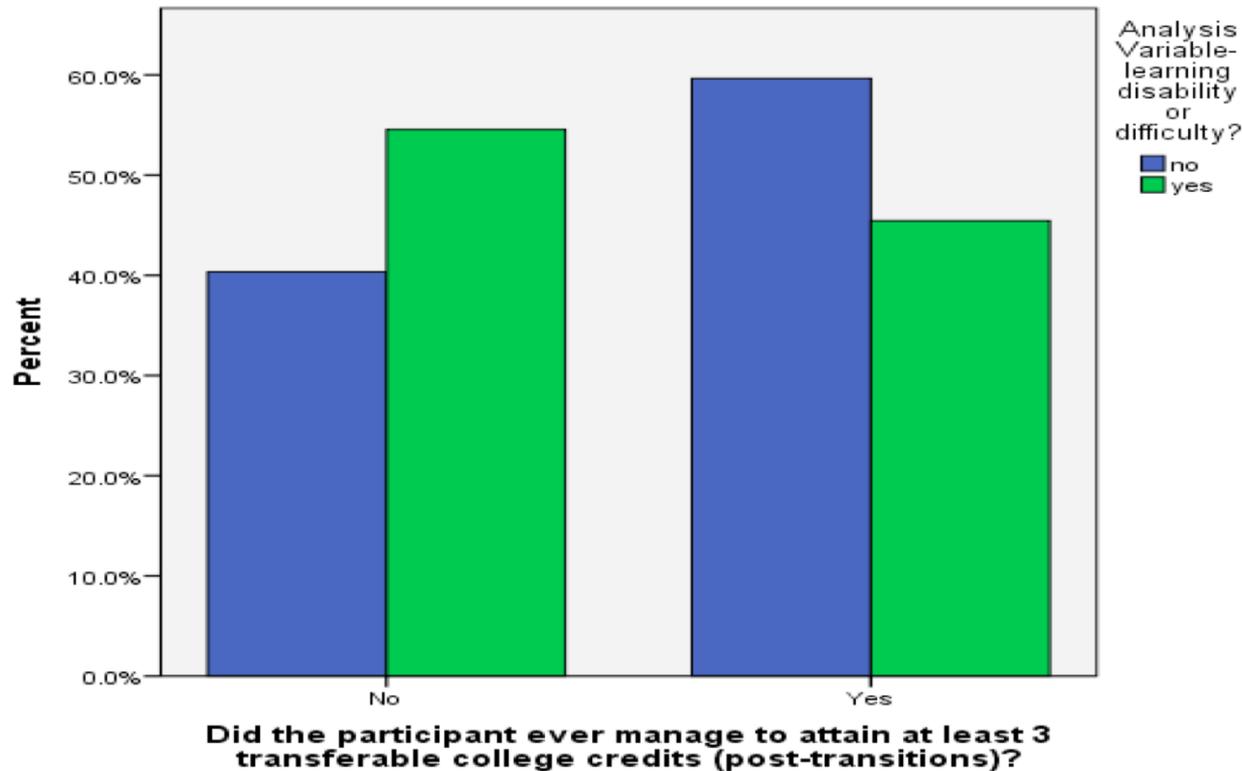
Significant individual factor:
Completing transition course

Completing transition course significantly related to both enrollment and success educational outcomes
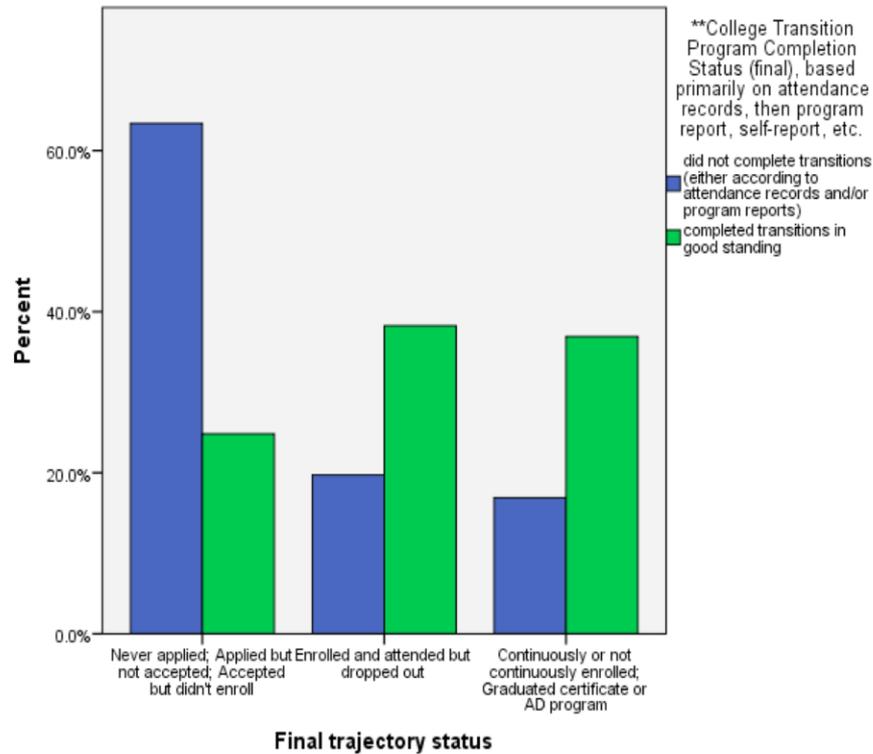
TRAJECTORY   TIPPING POINT
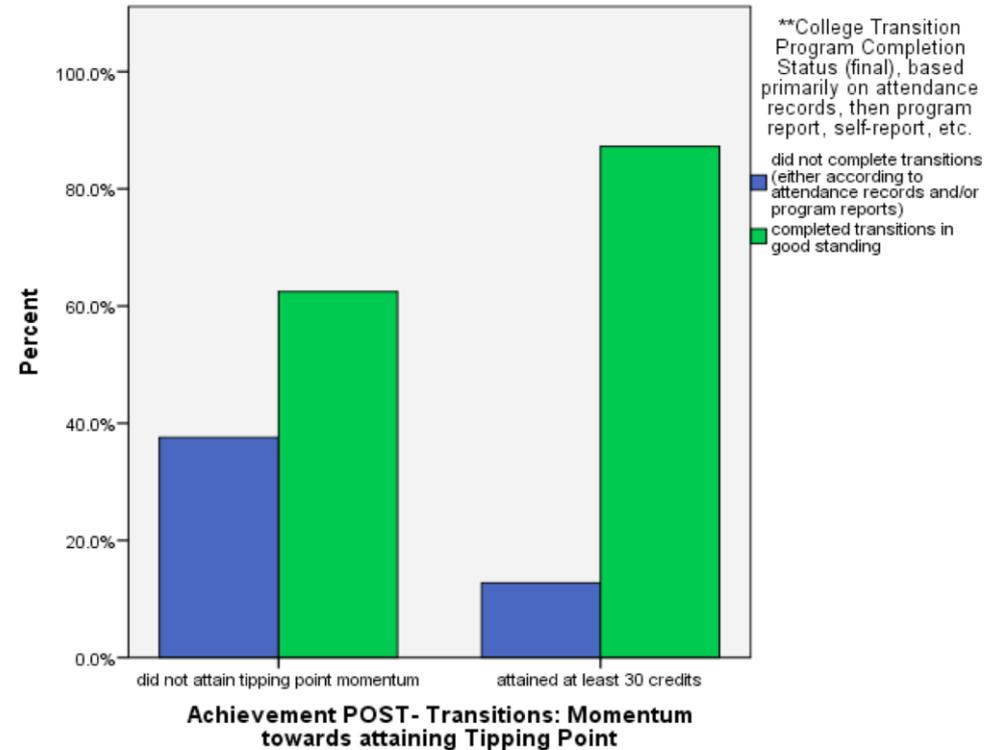
Factors related to transition course completion

Attendance policy	Did not complete course (n=74)	Completed course (n=153)
Expected, not mandatory	42%	58%
Mandatory	27%	73%

Student life skills component	Did not complete course	Completed course
No component	46%	54%
Medium or high component	30%	70%

Country of birth	Did not complete course	Completed course
U.S.	36%	64%
Other than U.S.	20%	80%

Significant Individual Factor: Attendance in transition course

Attending more hours in transition course related to enrollment outcomes

TRAJECTORY
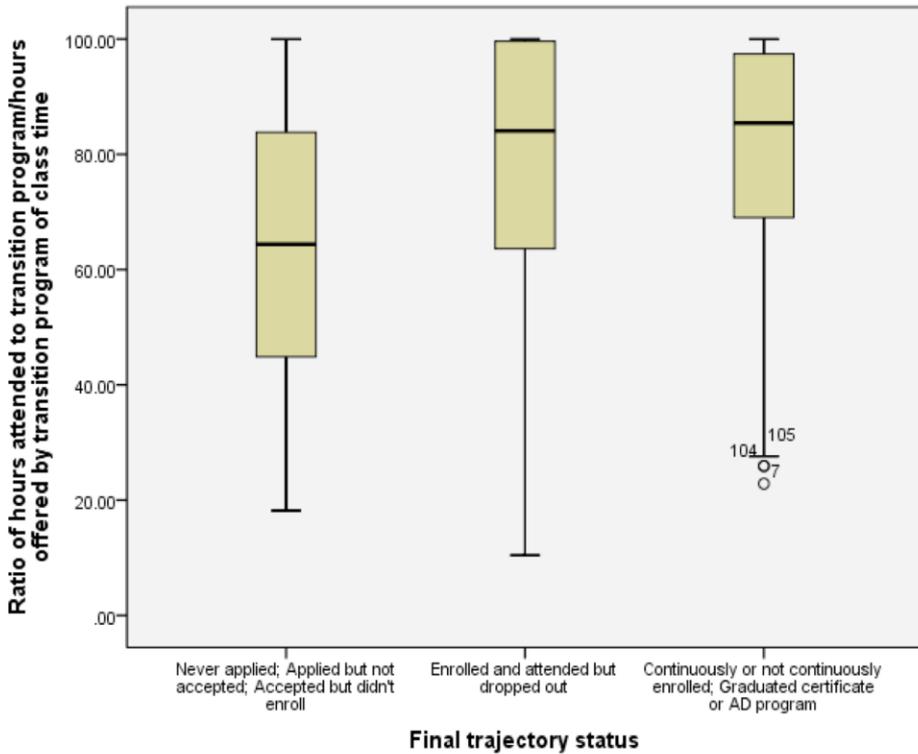
EARNED 3 CREDITS
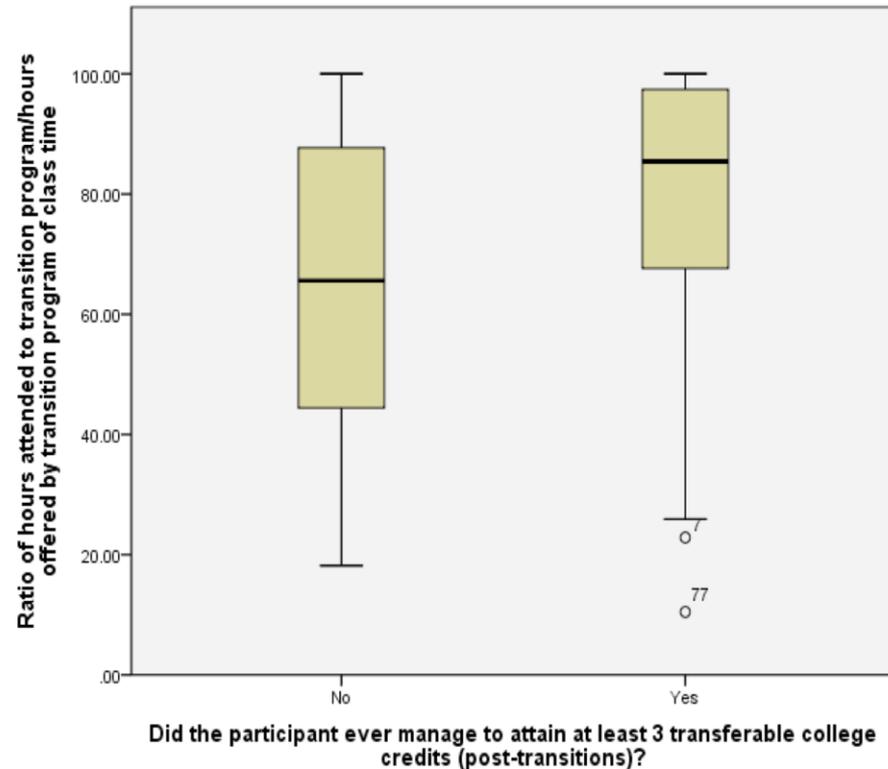
Significant Individual Factor: Career planning skills

Knowledge of and planning for careers (composite) related to both enrollment and success

TRAJECTORY
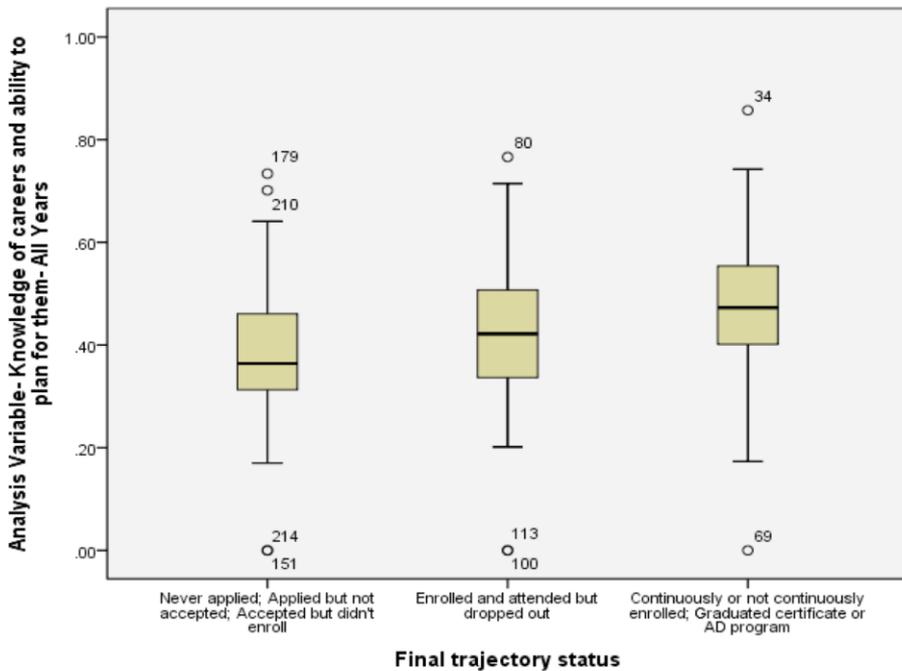
TIPPING POINT
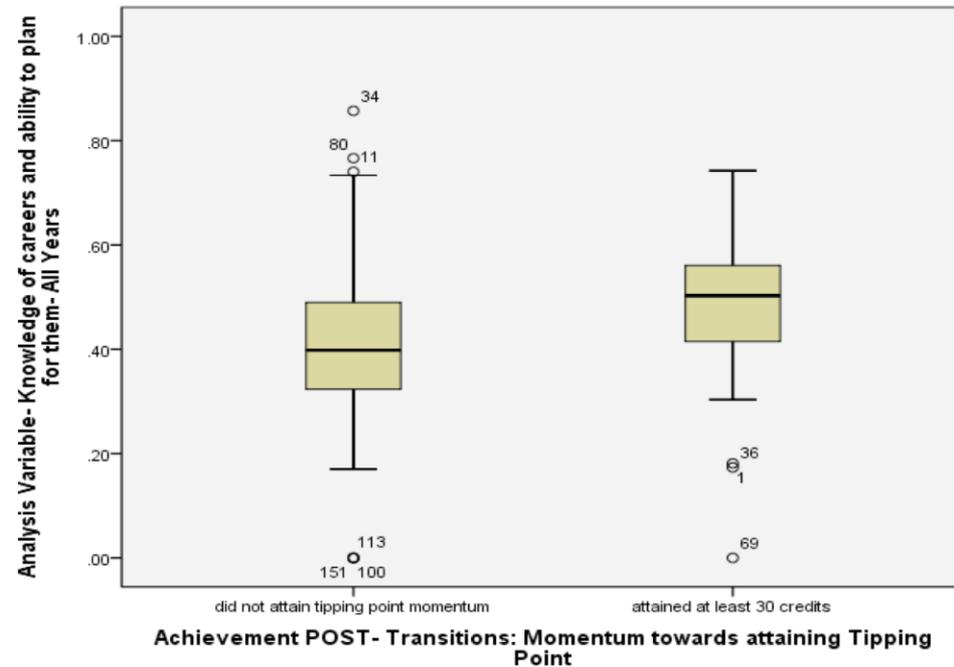
Significant Individual Factor: Specific job goals

- Ideal job specificity: Participants who could name a specific job, rather than just a field or a role, were significantly more likely to:

  - enroll in college (earn 3 credits)
  - enroll within 1 year,
  - earn more credits, and
  - complete more semesters.

R^2 Linear = 0.040

mean of ideal job SPECIFICITY from all years

Success Dependent Variable -for trajectories 4-8 only: number of transferrable college credits earned, through 9/1/11 for F-07 group and 12/31/11 for S-08 group
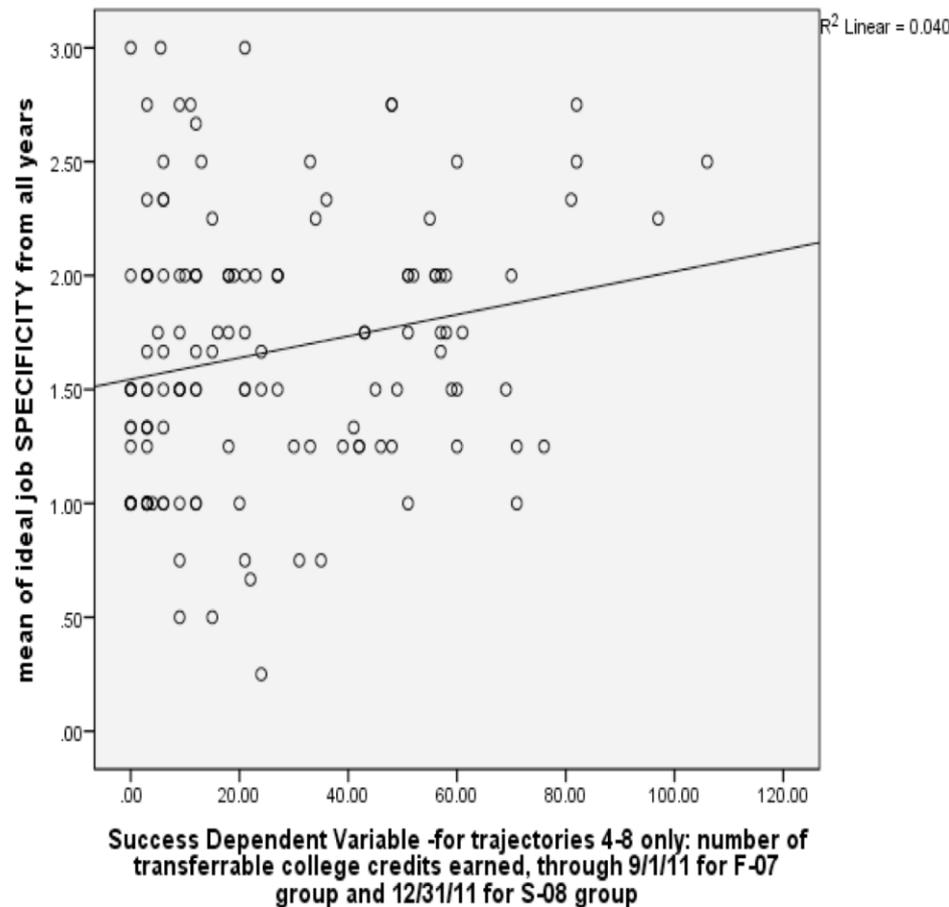
Significant Individual Factor: Goal-setting skills

Participants who scored high on the "goal setting" composite score (goal planning and strategizing) were more likely to:

- Enroll in college (3 credits)
- Enroll in and stay in college (trajectory)
- Reach 30 credit tipping point momentum
- Complete more semesters
- Earn more credits.

R^2 Linear = 0.074

Analysis Variable- Goal Setting variable compilation from all years (from Ind Chars section- includes # of goals, goal strategies, ideal job specificity & planning)

Success Dependent Variable -for trajectories 4-8 only: number of transferrable college credits earned, through 9/1/11 for F-07 group and 12/31/11 for S-08 group
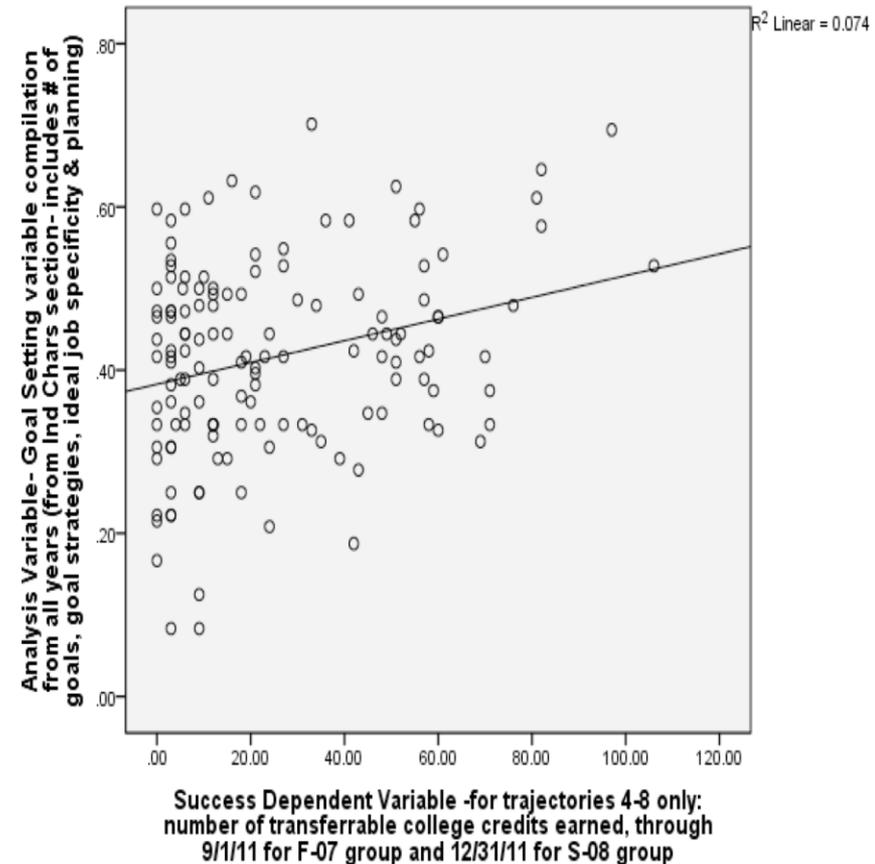
Significant Individual Factor: Support Network

- Having broader combined support across categories of people—family and friends, college transitions, work and community—was related to
  - earning 3 credits and
  - reaching 30-credit tipping point.

Significant Individual Factor:
Transition Staff Perceptions

- Those participants whom transition program staff rated as likely to have "personal psychological" problems on the exit rating form were much less likely to enroll, persist and succeed in college

Significant Program Factors

- ABE-to-College transition program grading policy
- Staff feedback on assignments
- Mentoring component in transition program
- Time spent on career planning in transition program
- Support from college transition staff

Significant Program Factors: Grading Policy

Grading Policy of Transition Program
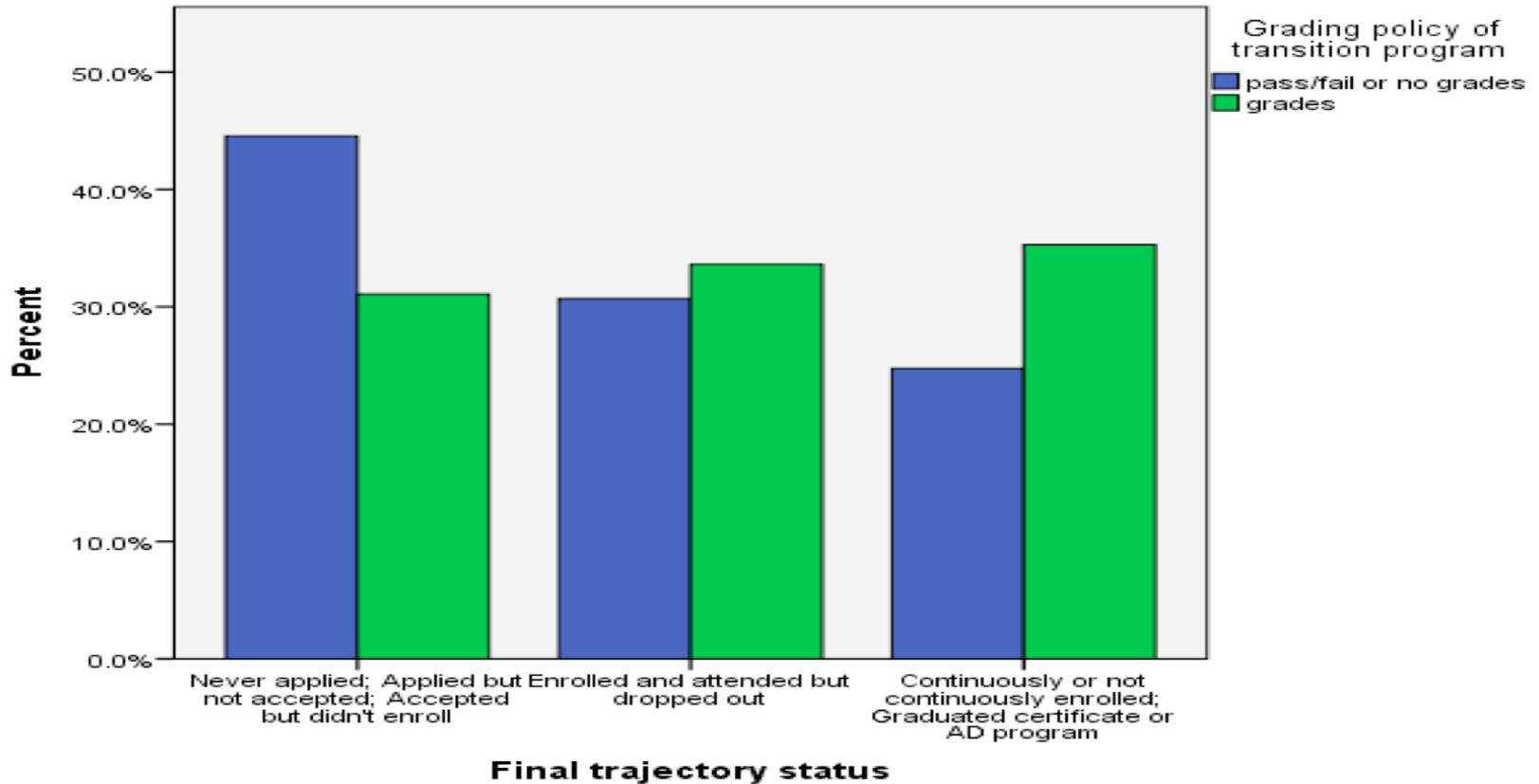
Significant Program Factors:
Staff feedback on assignments

Staff feedback on assignments during transition
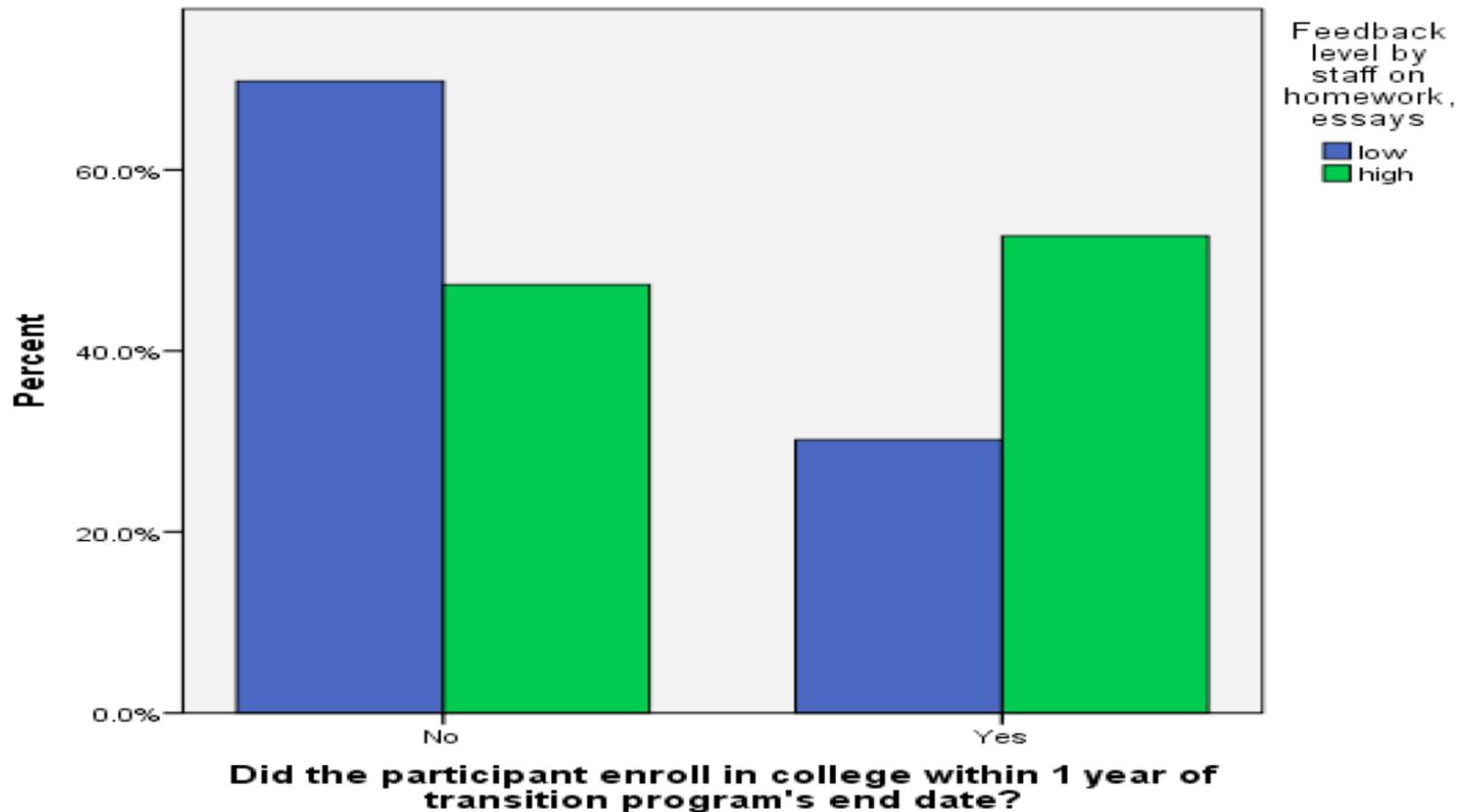
Significant factors: Mentoring program

Presence of a mentoring component in program
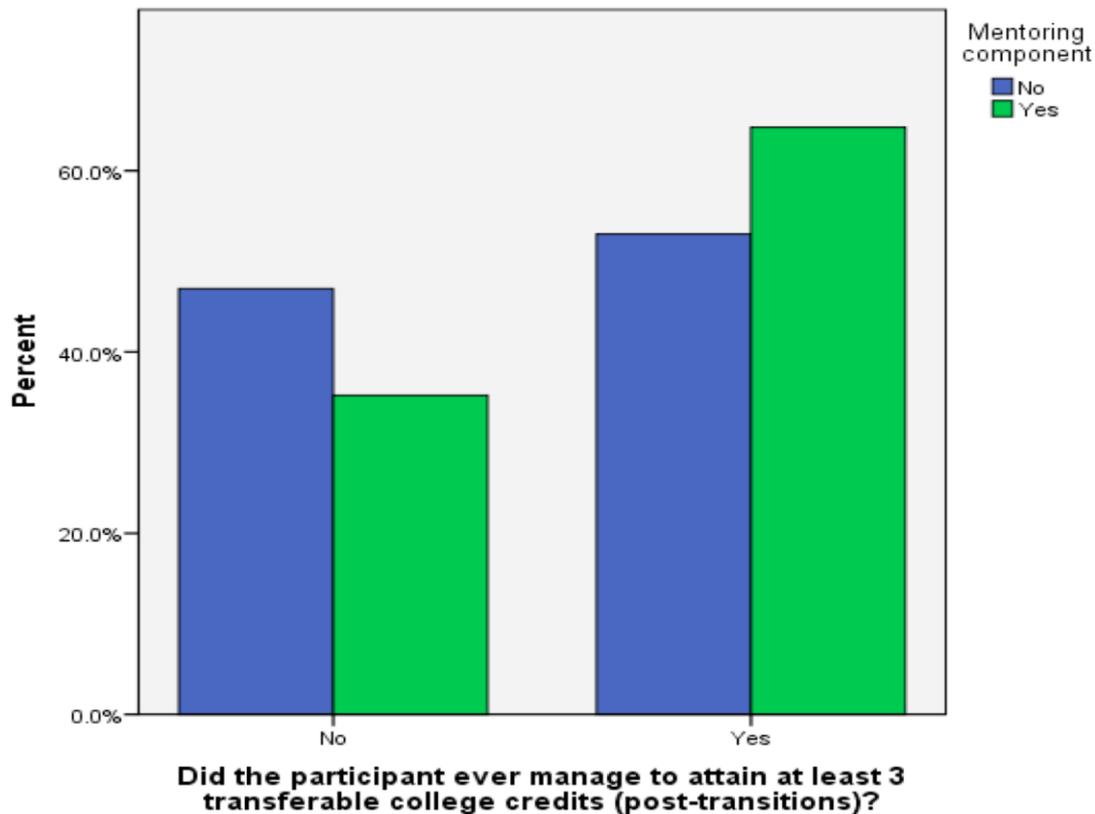
Significant program factors: Career planning

Effect on overall trajectory of more and less time spent on career planning in transition course
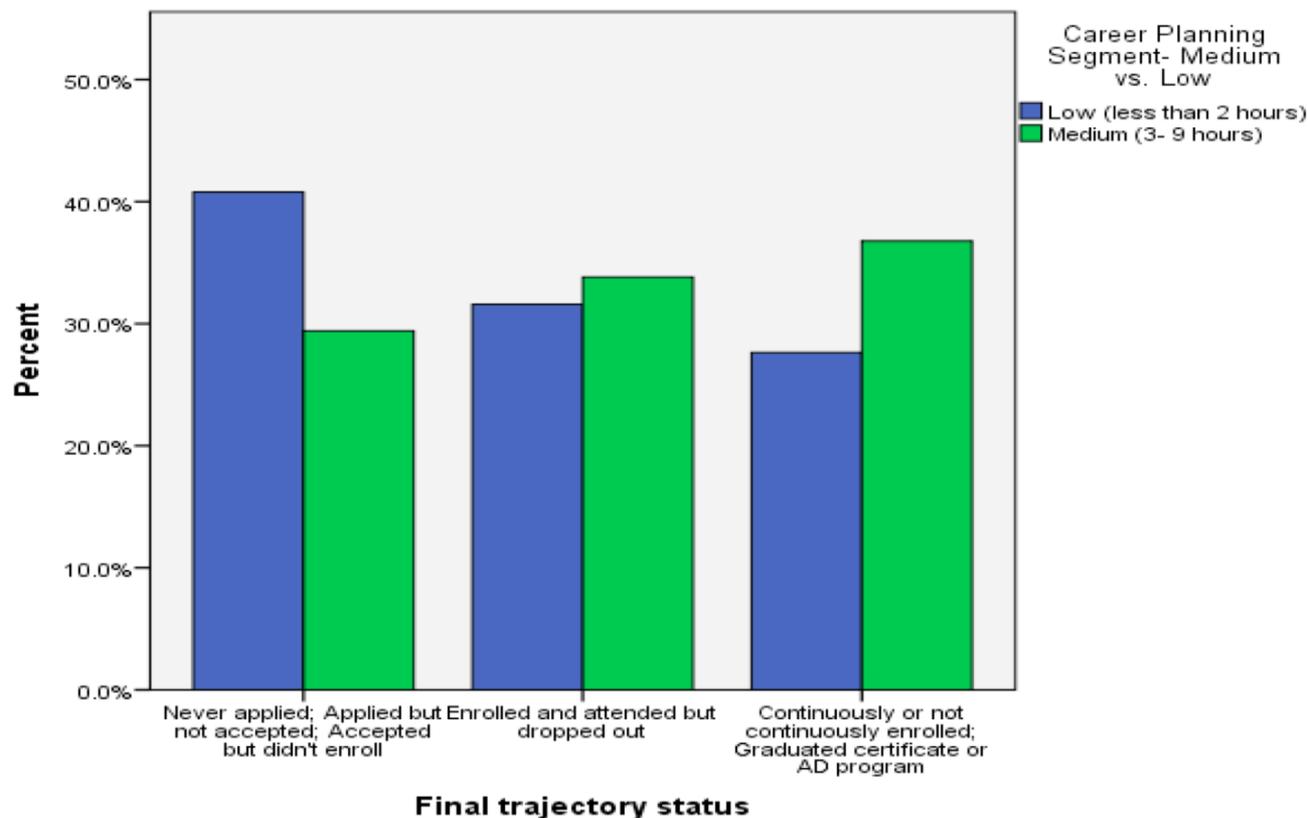
Significant factors: Support from Transition Staff

- Having more support from people associated with college transitions course related to:
  - earning 3 credits
  - overall trajectory (staying enrolled)
  - reaching 30-credit tipping point

Significant College Factors

- Support from people in college
- Engagement in college activities

Significant College Factors: College People Support

- For those who ever enrolled in college…support from people <u>in</u> college—fellow students, instructors, members of clubs joined*—was related to:
  - earning more credits
  - completing more semesters.

*Once <u>in</u> college, family/friends support, work colleague support, community people support, or college transition people support were not significant

Significant College Factors: Engagement in College Activities

- Once in college, ATLAS participants who more often engaged in college activities (seminars, study sessions, etc.) or took advantage of college supports (library, student support center, etc.) were significantly more likely to persist and succeed.

Factors that mattered for enrollment vs. persistence and success

Mattered for enrolling (getting in to college) (3 credits, overall trajectory OR enroll within 1 year)	Mattered for persistence and success (only for those who ever enrolled) (number of semesters, total credits earned OR reaching tipping point)
Being younger	Working less than full-time
Being an immigrant	Getting support from people in college
Fewer financial obstacles (composite)	Engaging more in college activities
Less family reliance on income	Having better ideal job planning skills
Receiving grades on transition course assignments	Higher GPA
Mentoring component in transition program	Being married or having a partner

Factors that mattered for enrollment vs. persistence and success

Mattered for enrolling (getting in to college) (3 credits, overall trajectory OR enroll within 1 year)	Mattered for persistence and success (only for those who ever enrolled) (number of semesters, total credits earned, tipping point)
Not having a learning disability	
Medium emphasis on student life skills in trajectory program	
Medium emphasis on career planning in trajectory prog	
Transition program helped with application	
Participant's higher opinion of transition program helpfulness	

Factors that mattered for enrollment AND success

- Completing the college transition course
- Having stronger goal setting skills (composite)
- Ability to state a more specific ideal job
- Having fewer health obstacles (composite)
- Having more categories of support people
- Ability to state career planning steps (composite)
- Improving Accuplacer arithmetic and compiled score (for 3 credits, enroll within 1 year, and reaching tipping point momentum)

Implications for Practice: "Malleable factors"

- Transition program
  - grading policy
  - feedback from staff on assignments
  - mentoring component
  - study skills component
  - career planning skills component
  - academic component
- College components:
  - Information, support, counseling

Implications for practice

- <u>College transition programs should</u>:
  - Give grades and ample feedback from staff on assignments
  - Include a mentoring component
  - Include components on study skills and career planning (but not TOO much time on them)
  - Help participants improve their Accuplacer skills
  - Help participants set specific goals and plan how to reach them
  - Help participants think about their ideal job and steps needed to reach it
  - Help student directly apply to college
  - Provide mentoring and extra support to older participants

Implications for practice

- <u>Colleges should</u>:
  - Help students strategize how to deal with health challenges
  - Ask teachers to include goal setting in each class
  - Make linkages between classes and students' ideal jobs
  - Encourage students to make friends in classes, go see their instructors, reach out to others
  - Encourage students to engage in college activities: clubs, out-of-class seminars or trips, etc.

Questions for further research

- What is the reason that completing the transition program makes a difference to enrolling in college?
    - Skills learned?
    - Self-efficacy gained?
    - Ability to manage life turbulence?
    - Other reason?

- Why do older participants find it harder to enroll in college?

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Significant* Individual Factors

Significant	Not significant
Financial obstacles, being the breadwinner	Logistical obstacles (composite)
Age	Household income
Marital status (for those ever enrolled in college)	Being a single parent
Country of origin	Parents went to college
Being the "breadwinner" in the household	Number hours worked per week
Number of people relied on for support (only for attaining 3 credits)	Social capital (composite)
Number of categories of people supporting	Family obstacles
Health problems	

*Significant for at least one of the six educational outcomes

Significant Individual Factors: Cognitive

Significant	Not significant
Accuplacer arithmetic score	Literacy test score
Accuplacer change in arithmetic score	Change in literacy test score (year 1 to year 4)
Accuplacer change in overall score	Academic obstacles (composite)
GPA (for those who ever enrolled)	
Number of developmental ed classes	
Learning disabilities	

Significant Individual factors: Non-cognitive

Significant	Not significant
Leadership experience	General planning skills (protocol)
Ratio of attendance at transition program	Self-efficacy (protocol)
Completion of transition program	Positive outlook (protocol)
Ideal job planning skills	Strength of goal
Career planning skills	Type of goal: material, fulfillment, identity
Engaging in college activities	
Individual goal setting	
Ideal job specificity	

Significant Transition program factors

Significant (all related to enrollment outcomes)	Not significant
Grading policy	Attendance policy
Amount of staff feedback	Program association with community college
Career planning component	Program location
Mentoring component in program	Earn college credit as part of transition program
Student life skills	Computer class as part of transition program
Program helped with college application	Days/week or timing of classes

Significant college factors

Significant	Not significant
Support from college transition people (for 3 credits, trajectory, and tipping point)	Knowledge of college culture
Support from people in college (for semesters and total credits)	

Thank you for attending!

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presented by Cristine Smith

Recording and slides from this webinar will be emailed to you and posted on our website:

collegetransition.org

Look for NCTN presenters at COABE 2014!