

## Using an Equity Lens to Assess Student Outcomes

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Dr. Estela Mara Bensimon, Dr. Alicia C. Dowd and Debbie Hanson, The Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California

BRIC, in partnership with the Center for Urban Education, is pleased to offer this Data Module: *Using an Equity Lens to Assess Student Outcomes* to BRIC participants and the California Community Colleges.\*

California community colleges are leading the nation in the diversity of our campuses, but persistent performance gaps are leaving too many of our historically underserved student populations behind. The movement to use data to shed light on these gaps and address them is growing. More and more campuses are systematically asking and answering questions about equity, or parity in student outcomes, using their own campus and system data.

In fact, many state data systems and policies now being created are based on the theory that data drive change. This premise can be found in the Spellings Commission Report, for example, which frequently asserts the importance of data, the need to further the development of data systems, and the value of clear and accessible information.

More and better data can improve decisions made by policymakers and institutions, but data alone cannot bring about equity. Accountability data are like a thermometer—they show the “temperature.” Just as a thermometer cannot change the temperature, however, data are not self-acting.

Action occurs when practitioners at the ground level, who are in the best positions to bring about change in practice, transform the data into actionable knowledge. This knowledge can then be used to drive the improvement of institutional performance and effectiveness.

This systematic use of data for problem solving is known as inquiry. To support inquiry towards the goal of creating equity in higher education, the Center for Urban Education’s (CUE) offers the Data Module: *Using an Equity Lens to Assess Student Outcomes*. The module introduces terms and concepts commonly used to examine student success data, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, from an equity perspective.

By progressing through this web-based instructional module at your own pace, you have the opportunity to learn about or hone your understanding of:

- Strategies for reading and presenting institutional data with a focus on equity;
- Strategies to draw on simple descriptive statistics (rates, shares, raw numbers, and the percent of an original cohort) to interpret the status of equity on campus;
- Methods for transforming data into evidence-based knowledge;
- Strategies for communicating the campus’s current state of equity to various audiences.

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