

FACULTY AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF READINESS

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What do you wish you would have done to be ready for college?

“I would have learned more skills like guitar-playing so I could woo the girls, and maybe studied harder for my advanced classes, also for the same reason.”

Sophomore, Engineering



Students' perceptions of readiness
are not what we think

Motivation



- In preparing students for college-level success, there is an overemphasis on content knowledge and an under-emphasis on other critical dimensions of readiness
 - ▣ Among students and parents, faculty, and institutional leadership
- There is an under-emphasis on addressing readiness at the research university
- Beliefs about readiness determine action

Theoretical Framework

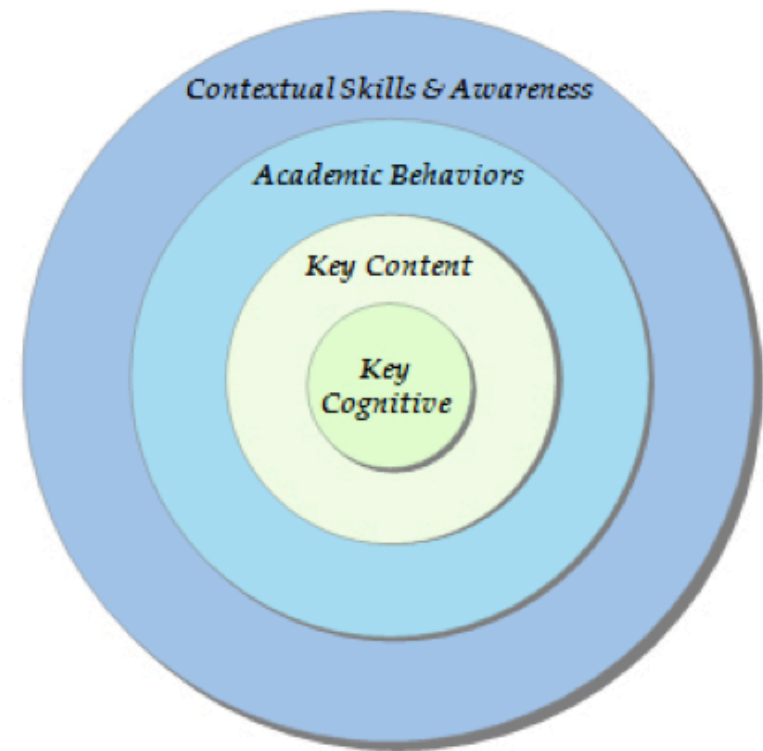


- Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura)
 - Human behavior is linked to belief systems

Theoretical Framework

- *Facets of College Readiness, Conley (2007)*

- Key cognitive strategies
- Content knowledge
- Academic behaviors
- Contextual skills



Dimensions of Readiness



□ **Key Cognitive Strategies**

- Problem solving
- Research
- Reasoning
- Interpretation
- Precision and accuracy

□ **Academic Behaviors**

- Time management
- Study skills
- Persistence
- Self awareness

Dimensions of Readiness



□ **Contextual Skills**

- College knowledge

□ **Content Knowledge**

- English
- Math
- Critical reading
- Science
- Social Science

Research questions



- What are perceptions of readiness in the research university?
 - ▣ What are faculty views on readiness?
 - ▣ What are students' views on readiness?
 - ▣ What are faculty perceptions of readiness in different research university contexts?

Data Sources



□ Students

- 2010 & 2011 SERU survey data (n=7535)
- 2009 CIRP survey data (n=4,482)
- Student focus groups (n=100)

□ Faculty

- Focus groups at UT-Austin (n=50)
- Survey of international higher education faculty (n>100)

Data Analysis



- Quantitative, statistical analysis of survey data
- Qualitative, grounded theory approach with open-ended survey data and focus group transcriptions

Student perceptions of readiness



- *Major finding: Student readiness is not only about content knowledge*
- Students expressed greatest areas of weakness in:
 - Study skills and positive study habits
 - Analysis and synthesis
 - Persistence when faced with new or challenging information
 - Help seeking behaviors

Student perceptions of readiness

What do you wish you would have done to be ready for college?

- Taken my classes more seriously- it is almost impossible though to convince a high schooler of the enormity of the transition to the college work load.
- Studied. I never had to study in high school like I do in college. If I could have learned a better way to study sooner, it would have been a lot easier to adjust.
- More demanding, rigorous high school curriculum that taught me the importance of understanding, rather than memorizing
- Learned better study habits; a lot of 'A' students in high school simply catch onto the information as it's given but college courses (usually) take more detailed study to learn and understand the material.

Student perceptions of readiness

- I wish I would have learned that procrastination and anxiety are very bad. My study skills aren't that great because high school was too easy for me. I could write a major paper the night before it was due and end up with the highest grade.
- I wish I would have been tested more on theories and ideas. I feel that in high school we are taught more to memorize. College is not about memorization. It's about understanding.
- Developed better time management skills, gotten into physical shape, and payed more attention in class/learned how to study
- I wish I would have been more informed about the whole college experience. Also, wish I would have known how crucial it is to study and be responsible once one is on his/her own.

Faculty perceptions of readiness



- *Major finding: Faculty expectations and observations of readiness are not only about content knowledge*
- Faculty expressed greatest areas of weakness in:
 - Intellectual curiosity
 - Analysis and synthesis
 - Persistence when faced with new or challenging information
 - Help seeking behaviors

Faculty Perceptions of Readiness

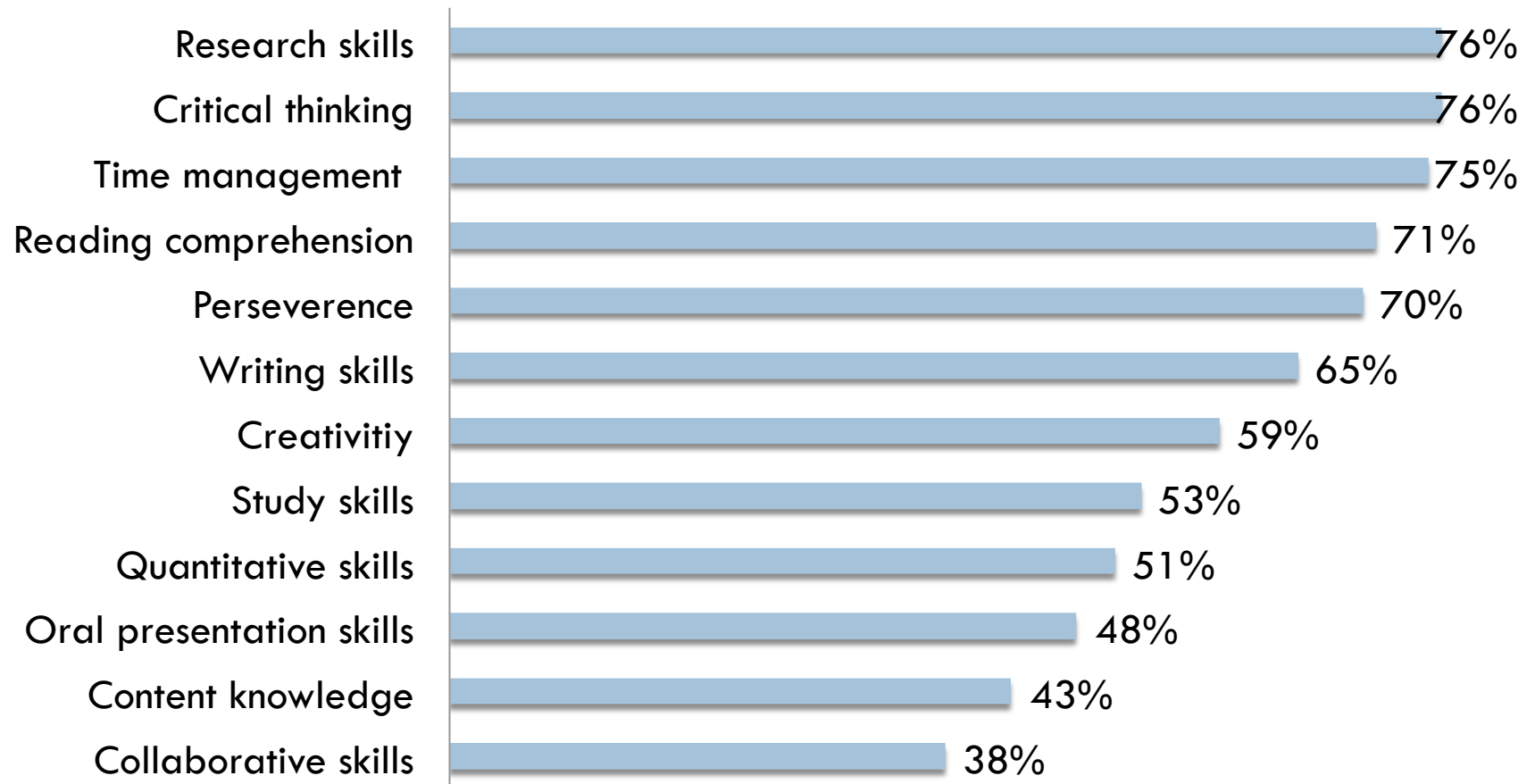
- Intellectual and historical curiosity, the ability to read carefully, the ability to make connections between/among diverse ideas.
- I expect them to have intellectual curiosity about the world and society, to be able to pose questions about the unknown or the uncertain, and to be able to express themselves with a certain degree of clarity.
- Some time management and responsibility, as well as basic grammar and sentence structure abilities. I did not expect any area knowledge or advanced research skills.
- Need a lot of support coming to terms with challenging text, can't be explicit about what in the text they didn't understand. Not used to looking beneath surfaces; don't know they can have subjective confrontation with what's around them.

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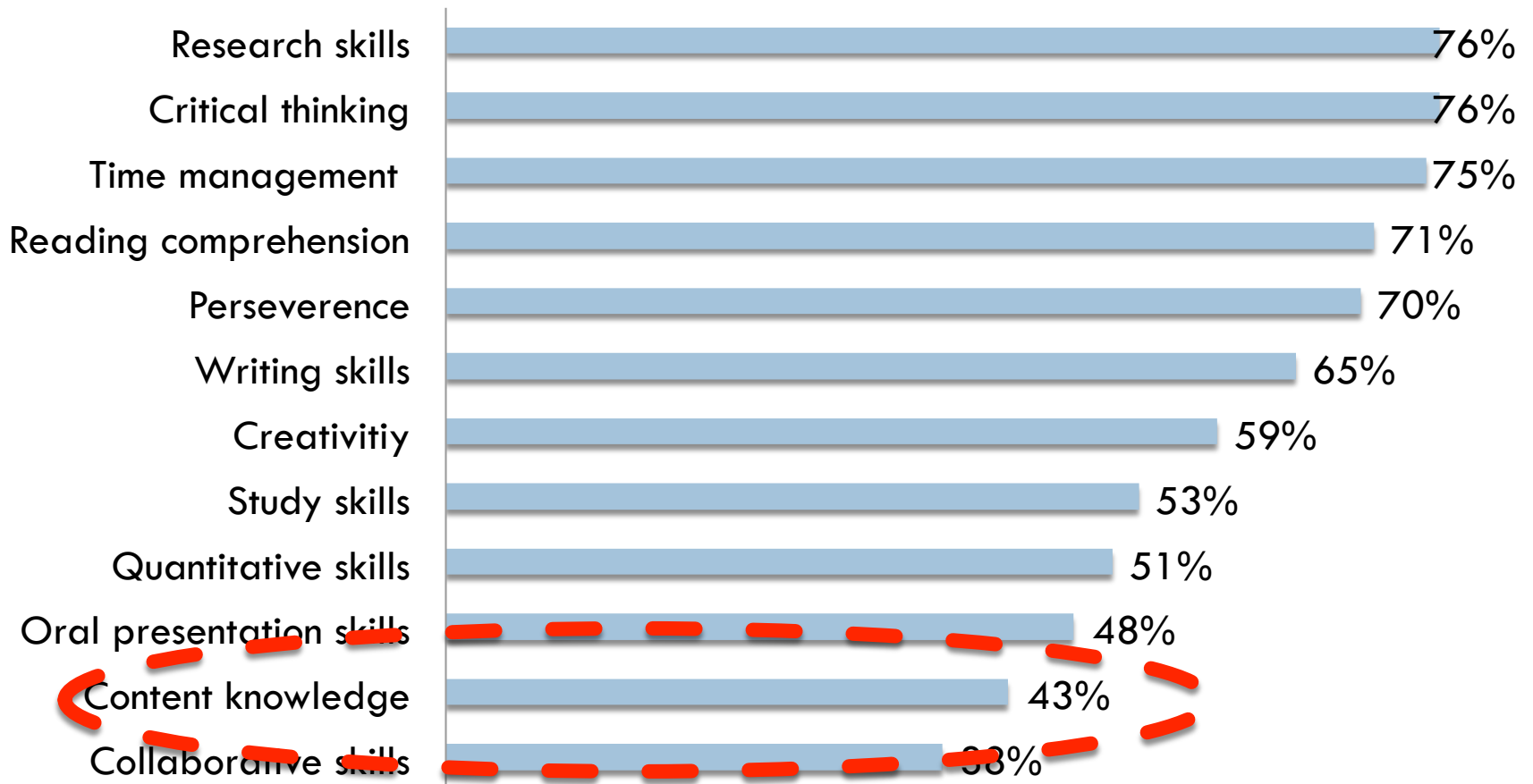
International faculty perceptions of readiness

What percentage of your students are unprepared in the following areas when they enter your class?



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How do we fix the universal problem of student readiness?

Fix the students, they are broken



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Fix the students, they are broken
Fix the faculty, they are broken



How do we fix the universal problem of student readiness?

Fix the students, they are broken

Fix the faculty, they are broken

Fix the way students learn

So what do we do about this?



- Developmental education curriculum should be designed with instructional activities that promote non-content related dimensions of readiness

Signaling



- Telling students exactly what you expect.
- Make explicit on the syllabus the prior knowledge and skills expectations and learning goals for your course in all dimensions, *not just content knowledge*

Diagnosing



- Figuring out where students fall along the readiness spectrum
- Looking for gaps in their knowledge or places where readiness outside of content impacts their learning

Diagnosing



- Baseline diagnostics in the first two weeks
- Formative evaluations (ConceptTests, Just in Time Teaching, One Minute Papers, Grading Exercises/Rubrics (self, peer, expert assessments), Homework

Transmitting



- The bridge between diagnosing and intervening
- Transmission is almost always about content, need transmission that is more than right/wrong why right, why wrong.
- Diagnosing is too often a one way street

Transmitting



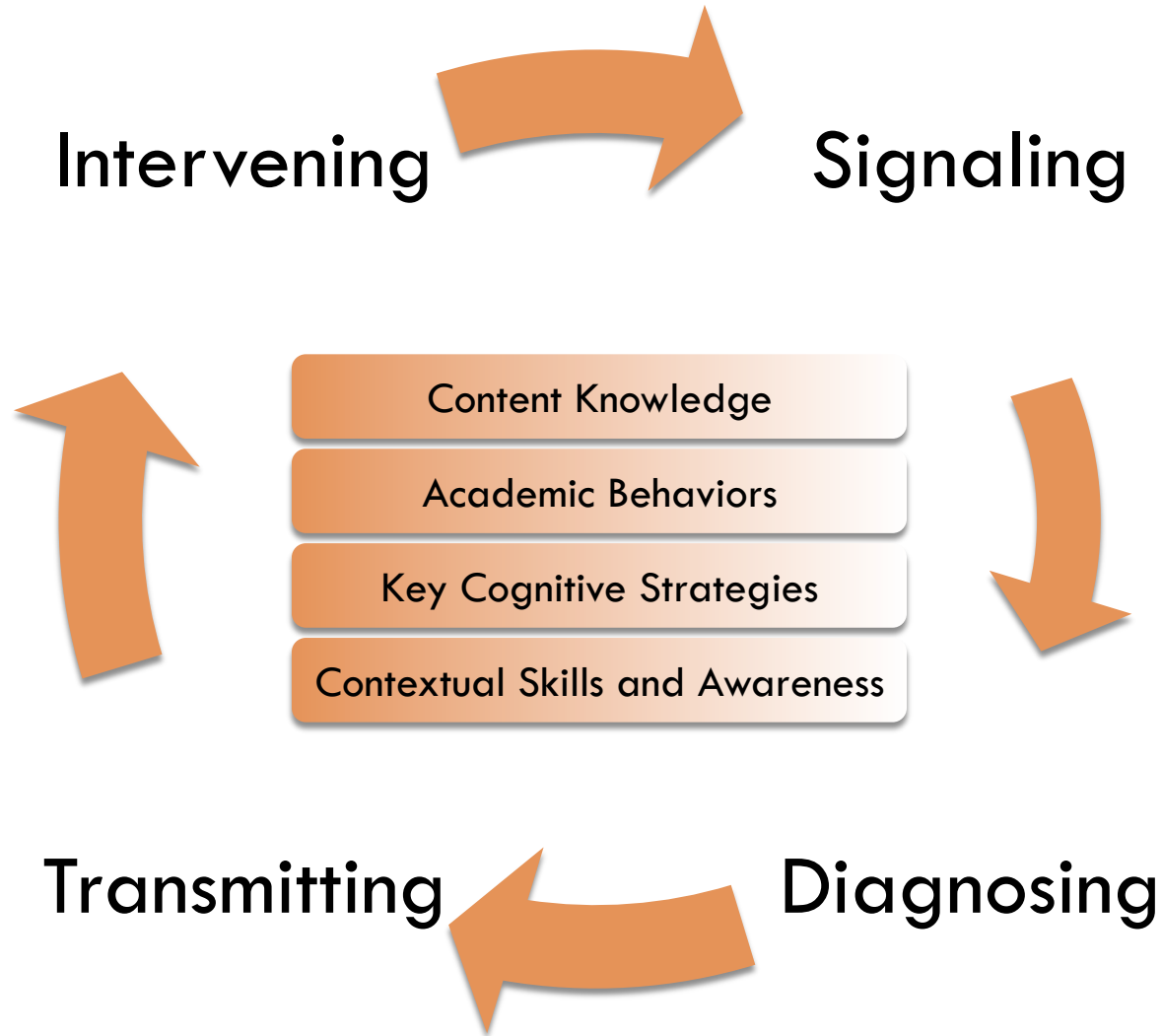
- Case Example: Tutoring
 - ▣ You need help with your writing go see a writing tutor
 - Why doesn't this work? Because the student doesn't understand why they need a writing tutor
 - Could be another issue

Intervening

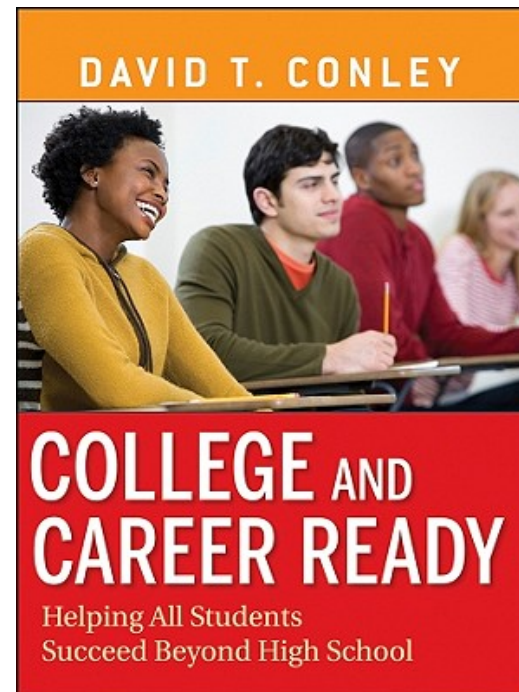
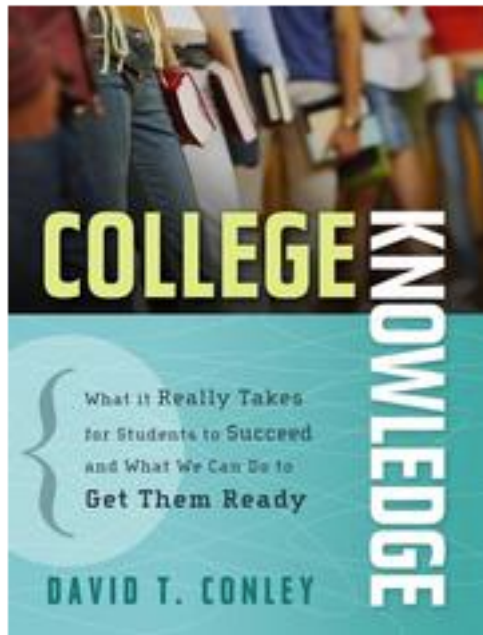


- Structures that intervene across the spectrum
 - ▣ Instructional interventions
 - Research-based pedagogies
 - Early warning systems
 - ▣ Institutional interventions
 - Learning communities
 - Tutoring
 - Academic coaching
 - Co-curricular involvement

Framework for ensuring student success in college



References and resources



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