

College-Ready, Career-Ready or Career- and College-Ready:
Do Education Stakeholder Perceptions Create Barriers
to Student Engagement?

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Abstract

The face and make-up of education has experienced an almost constant state of reformation resulting in progressive benchmarks from each transition: the establishment of national education goals (Vinovskis, 2009); increased federal policy on education and accountability (DeBray, 2006); No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation (Rebell & Wolff, 2009) and the National Governor's Association Common Core State Standards (Herian, 2011). As a result, there is debate as to whether the educational challenge of today is best summed up by the assurance that all students succeed in meeting college-ready, career-ready or career- and college-ready standards (Stone & Lewis, 2012; CORD & NASDCTEc, 2012; Scott & Sarkees-Wircenski, 2008).

Utilizing a social justice model, the researcher investigated, through the ethic of community, to identify teacher perceptions of college-ready, career-ready and career- and college-ready education. Statistical significance would enhance conclusions drawn from the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data. When people are involved, however, seldom does it turn out that the answer is statistically clear. The present study shows that educators perceive there to be barriers to progress during secondary matriculation. It is not, however, clear that one's orientation toward a philosophy of college-ready, career-ready, or career- and college-ready gives the clearest answer as to why these barriers exist.

The results indicate that educators do not have their heads stuck in the sand, promoting and supporting a single path to secondary matriculation. The results of the research offer hope that

educator perceptions are changing and moving toward greater opportunities for students. Tapping into the commitment of educators to improve student achievement will assist students in attaining career goals and advance achievement in American schools.