

# Academic Language and its Relationship with Hispanic/Latinx Students' Sense of Belongingness

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# Learning Outcomes

- How to utilize the concept of academic language to investigate the intersectionality of student experiences in the reading and writing domain.
- How to leverage from data to help practitioners make informed decisions about program improvement.
- How to evaluate a reading and writing program as it relates to students sense of belongingness.



# Student Success at UCSC

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## Mission

*With a commitment to promoting equity, inclusion, and a sense of wellbeing for all of our students, our mission is to support the development of the 'whole' student, using research-based, innovative best practices that enable UC Santa Cruz students to thrive academically, professionally, and personally.*

We support our mission by aligning our values to the UC Santa Cruz [Principles of Community](#):

**Open:** We offer safe and open space for student voice, student initiatives, and create opportunities for transformative student learning.

**Caring:** We create a safety net for students by coordinating responses to immediate situations and developing proactive initiatives for evolving future needs.

**Just:** We partner with campus and community resources to assist students experiencing challenging circumstances.



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## What We Support

With a [commitment](#) to promoting belonging and wellbeing for all students, we support initiatives that seek to create research-based, innovative programs that help students thrive academically, professionally, and personally.

Funded initiatives seek to improve the lives of students, with a particular focus on those at highest risk.

Student success is not the sole responsibility of the student, but requires alignment with campus policies, processes, and ensuring a positive climate with adequate resources available to our students—particularly those at highest risk. Efforts must occur at all levels in the university, be coordinated, and mutually reinforcing.

The Division of Student Success is committed to transforming classroom pedagogy, easing the transition to college, improving climate and promoting sense of belonging and wellbeing.

Current funded initiatives are:

### Easing the Transition to College



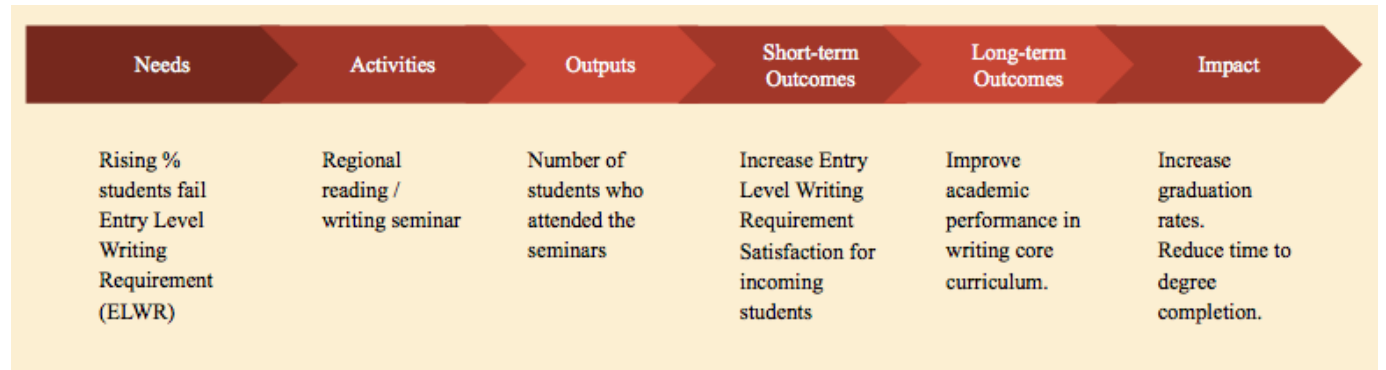
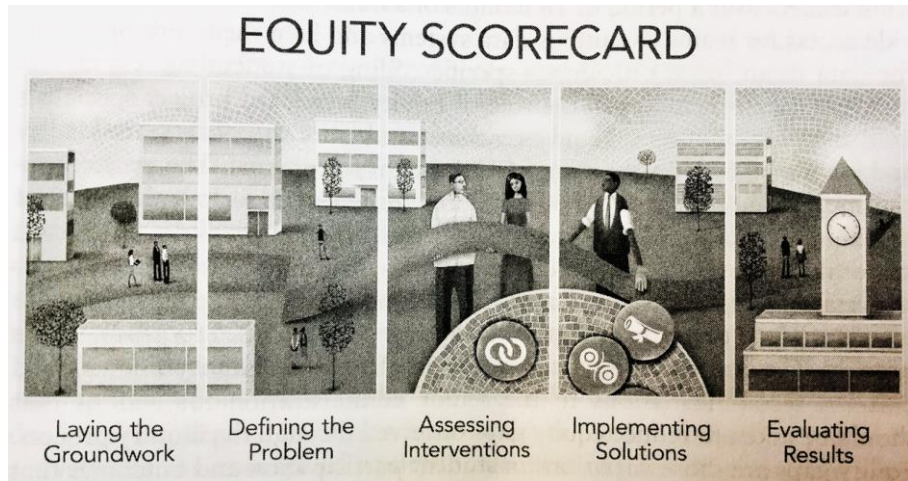
#### [Improving the Cultural Transition to UC Santa Cruz for First-Year, First-Generation Students](#)

With student success funding, we facilitated a 2-hour interactive conversation with first-year, first-generation college students on the Cultural Transition to UC Santa Cruz, where they learned about, discussed, and reflected on the cultural and psychological consequences of transitioning to college. We also launched the UC Santa Cruz First Generation Initiative, a visibility campaign now in its first year.

**Student success is not the sole responsibility of the student, but requires alignment with campus policies, processes, and ensuring a positive climate with adequate resources available to our students—particularly those at highest risk. Efforts must occur at all levels in the university, be coordinated, and mutually reinforcing.**



# From Needs to Institutional Impact



(Figure adapted from Dowd & Bensimon, 2015)



# UCSC HSI Overview US Dept of Education Title III & V

|                                     | <b>UCSC MAPA<br/>2.6 million 2015-2020</b>  | <b>Cultivamos Excelencia - SJCC-<br/>UCSC Cooperative 1.1 million 2015-<br/>2020</b> | <b>HSI STEM - SEMILLA<br/>5.9 million 2016-2021</b>            |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Math</b>                         | Collaborative Math 2  |  | STEM Learning Center, LSS, ACE<br>College Math 3 Seminars      |
| <b>Writing</b>                      | WORD Regional Institutes (SF, Oakland,<br>Los Angeles)                              | Research Writing Course @ SJCC   | Writing support for internship applications                    |
| <b>Sense of Belonging</b>           | Regional Family Conferences<br>El Centro Internships & Student Focus<br>Groups      | SJCC Student UCSC Campus<br>Visits, Family Day                                       | STEM Learning Center, ACE, MEP, STEM<br>Diversity              |
| <b>Advising</b>                     | Math 2 & Writing Advising<br>CFL/iMAP, Multicultural Competence<br>Adviser Training | Transfer/Retention Counselor, Grad<br>Student Mentoring,<br>Financial Literacy       | Holistic STEM Counselors<br>STEM Academy<br>Career Development |
| <b>Transfer</b>                     |   | Research Opportunities<br>Articulation - SJCC  | STEM Transfer<br>Academies & Articulation Review               |
| <b>Faculty Prof<br/>Development</b> | Writing & Math faculty PD   | PD for Faculty at both campuses  | Equity Analysis & Reporting<br>STEM Faculty PD, TA Training    |



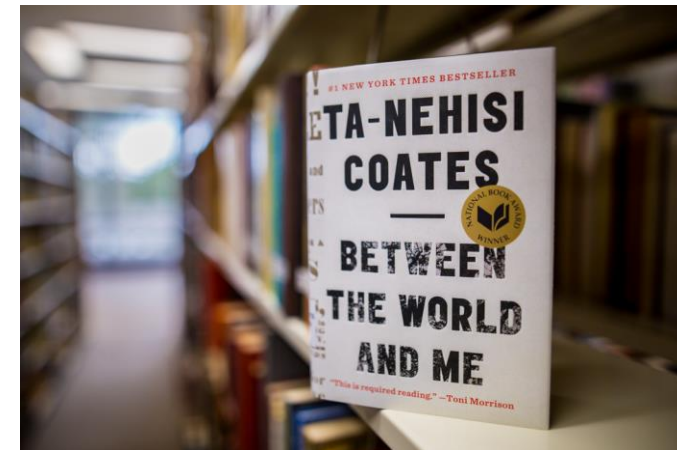
# Writing Originating in Reading and Dialogue (W.O.R.D)

Regional summer workshops for students beginning studies at UC Santa Cruz in the Fall. Three weeks of in-class workshops in August. 3-hour class sessions followed by two weeks online instruction.

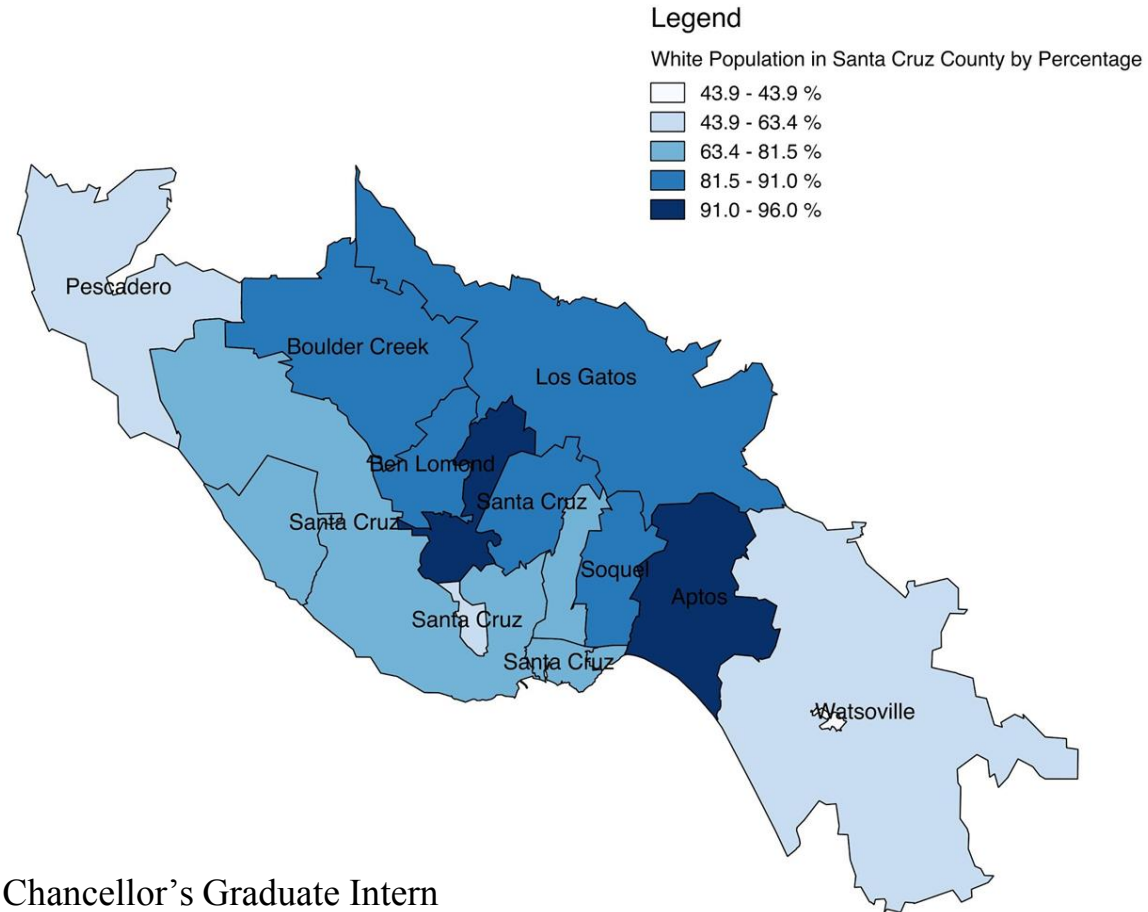
Consist of: literacy and critical consciousness themes. Texts from various genres and disciplines, reading strategies and tools. Discussion quick writes for reflection on reading, personal experience and discussion.



Juan Poblete  
Professor  
of Latin  
American  
Literature  
and main  
lead of the  
W.O.R.D  
program.



# UCSC

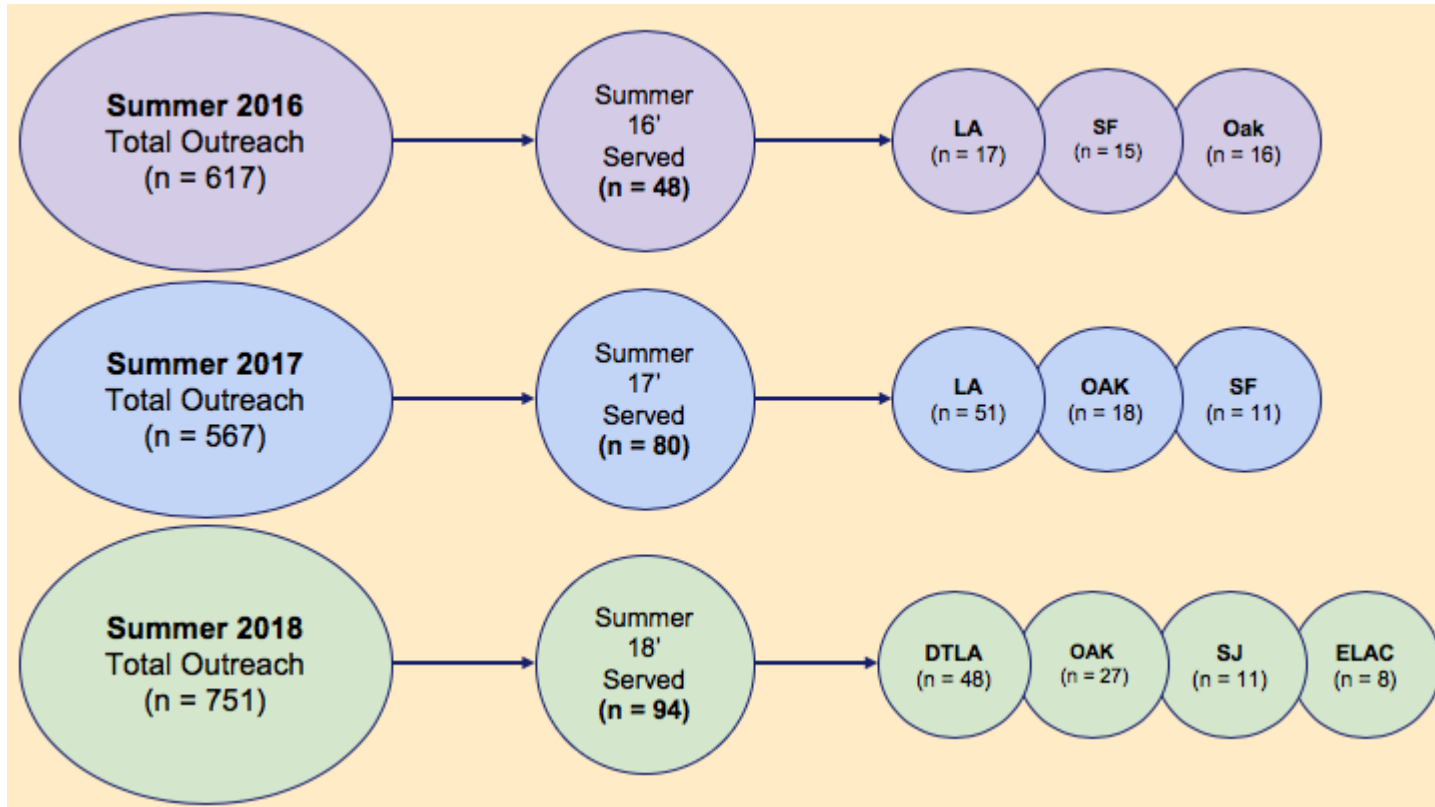


Visual courtesy of Andrea Vazquez, M.A., Chancellor's Graduate Intern





# W.O.R.D. Students - Outreached & Served



# Course Readings

- “Knowledge is Power” by Thomas Holt
- “The ‘Banking’ Concept of Education” by Paulo Freire
- “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” by Gloria Anzaldúa
- “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr.
- “Public Statement by Eight Alabama Clergymen”
- Multiple texts for examining social science genres
- Multiple texts for examining natural and physical science genres



# W.O.R.D. - On-Site Class Curriculum

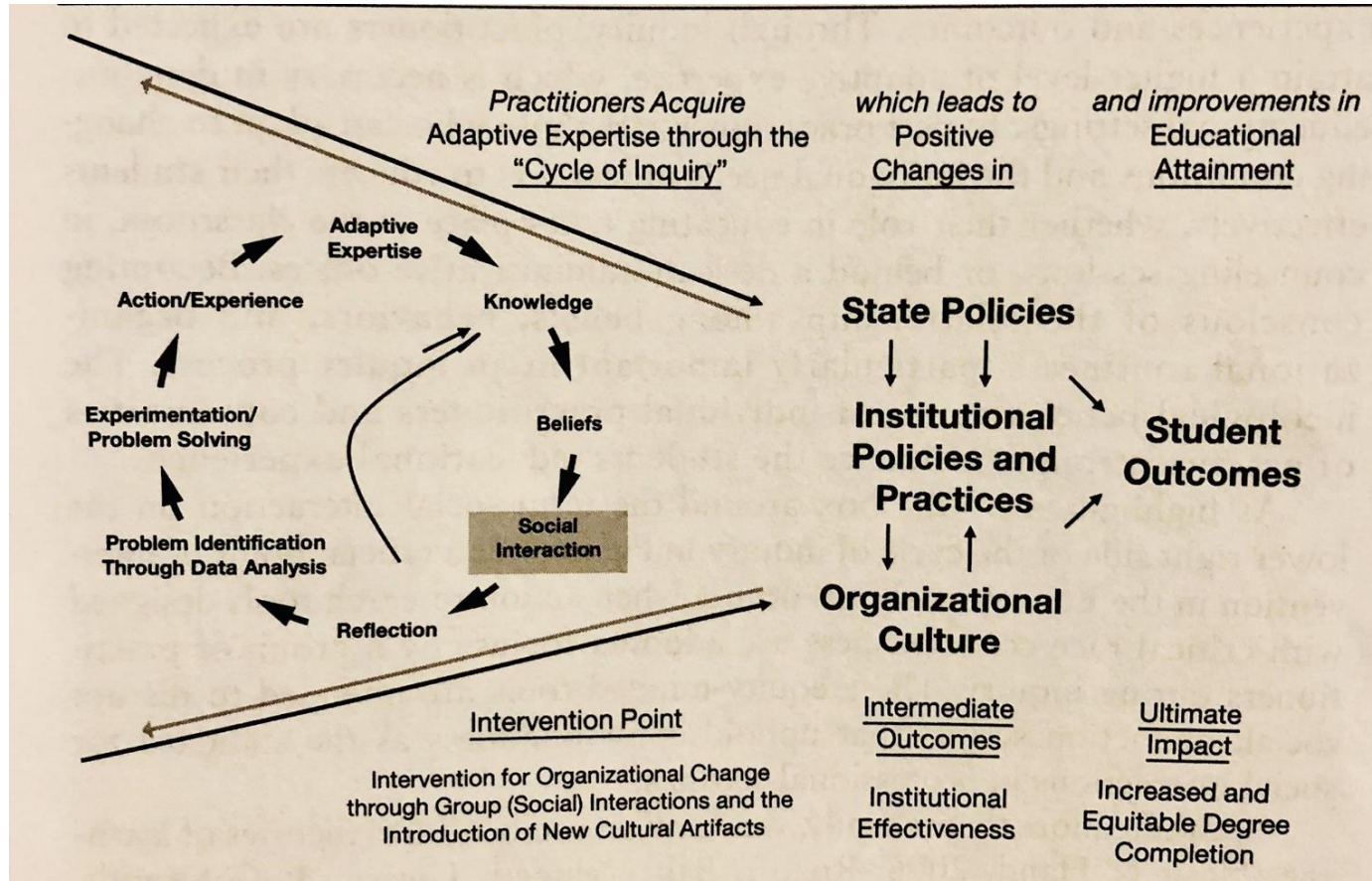
- Literacy and Critical Consciousness Themes for Each Day
- Texts From Various Genres and Disciplines
- Reading Strategies and Tools
- Discussion
- Quick Writes: reflection on reading, personal experience and discussion



*Summer 2018 Students*



# Theoretical Framework for Institutional Change



(Figure adapted from Dowd & Bensimon, 2015)



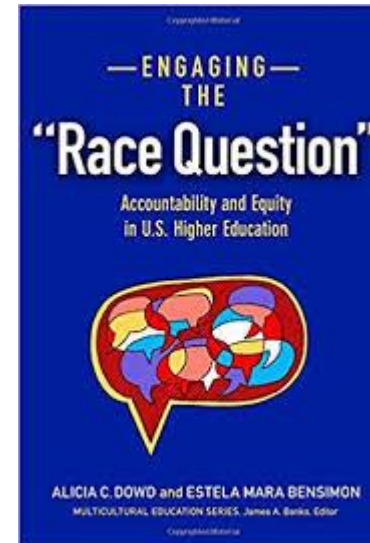
# Practitioner Inquiry Cycle



(Dowd & Bensimon, 2015)



# Educational Equity?



**USC** Rossier  
*Center for Urban Education*



**HSI** UC SANTA CRUZ  
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# Defining Equity

The inability to predict students' achievement and participation based solely upon characteristics such as race, class, ethnicity, gender, beliefs and proficiency in the dominant language. When we can no longer detect or predict student outcomes, such as GPA, graduation, retention, based solely on these markers then we will achieve parity. Ultimately, equity in education is not just an abstract goal but an ongoing process. A process that consciously entails the empowerment of practitioners to be agents of change.

(Dowd & Bensimon, 2015; Gutierrez, 2002; Rodriguez, 1998)



# Academic Language

Academic language is the language needed by students to do the work in educational settings. It includes, discipline- specific vocabulary, grammar and punctuation, and applications of rhetorical conversations and devices that are typical for a content area.





# Why is Academic Language Important?

- Students who master academic language are more likely to be successful in academic and professional settings.
- Students who do not learn academic language may struggle and dropout of school.



# W.O.R.D. Qualitative Data - Academic Experience

.. in high school I had teachers that were talking and my mind was blown. But her... [core instructor] it's like she's even higher cuz she'll be talking and I'm waiting for her to get to the point and she side tracks and so she's never getting anywhere. Like its all these run on sentences she doesn't finish. **And when I take notes there's gaps, and I don't know if I should complete them cuz I don't understand what's going on.. - WORD 2018 Student**

Data courtesy of Andrea Vazquez, M.A., Chancellor's Graduate Intern



# W.O.R.D. Qualitative Data - Academic Experience

S1: I feel like academic wise... I don't say anything cuz I'm so scared to speak, to be judge of *how* I speak. The vocabulary, how it's not up to the standard.

A: Do any of you feel that way?

S2: Yeah I got her. I feel that sometimes the people in my class is so *superior*, the vocabulary is so heavy that if I speak up it doesn't sound as smart even though it's the same thoughts, it just doesn't sound as smart. It's that barrier.

Data courtesy of Andrea Vazquez, M.A., Chancellor's Graduate Intern



# W.O.R.D. Qualitative Data - Academic Experience

For me, like a few times, I have been shut down by my classmates. When we are analyzing something, and they say something I'm like ok, and so I say something too and they're like "no because this and this" and then I say something else and they're like "no", and so then I'm like what's the point. **My views aren't correct.**

- WORD 2018 Student

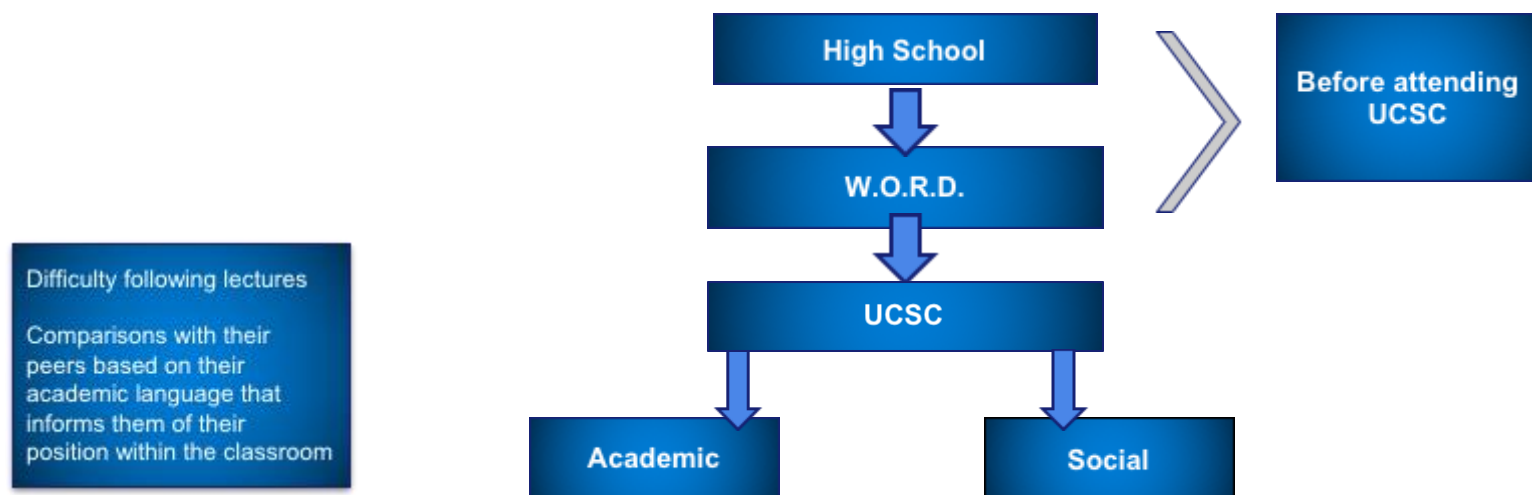
Data courtesy of Andrea Vazquez, M.A., Chancellor's Graduate Intern



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# “Acculturation” Schema



Data courtesy of Andrea Vazquez, M.A., Chancellor’s Graduate Intern



## W.O.R.D. Qualitative Data - Social Experience

I think WORD, yeah academically it helped me transition but more than academically it was helpful transition socially and I was able to make friends there and meet people with similar academic goals. And those people who I met at WORD would text me and ask me if I have applied to this program and that other program. And it was kinda comforting knowing that when I got here, I wouldn't be a total loner from the beginning, and most of them are Hispanic so I felt like I could bond culturally. There is something nice about having friends who share something cultural. - WORD 2018 Student

Data courtesy of Andrea Vazquez, M.A., Chancellor's Graduate Intern



## W.O.R.D. Qualitative Data - Social Experience

A: Where, if you had to pinpoint space on campus, or a class, where you are like “these are my people”. Where would that be?

S: R-PAATH. I love R-PAATH. I love the people from R-PAATH

A: What is that?

S: R-PAATH is the Stevenson house. That is painted - Rosa Parks. I think I know probably that whole entire building.

Data courtesy of Andrea Vazquez, M.A., Chancellor’s Graduate Intern



# W.O.R.D. Qualitative Data - Social Experience

I feel most comfortable at my own college - at Oakes. When I came here, I thought I was gonna have culture shock - white people like everywhere. But then at Oakes it is like the most diverse place.

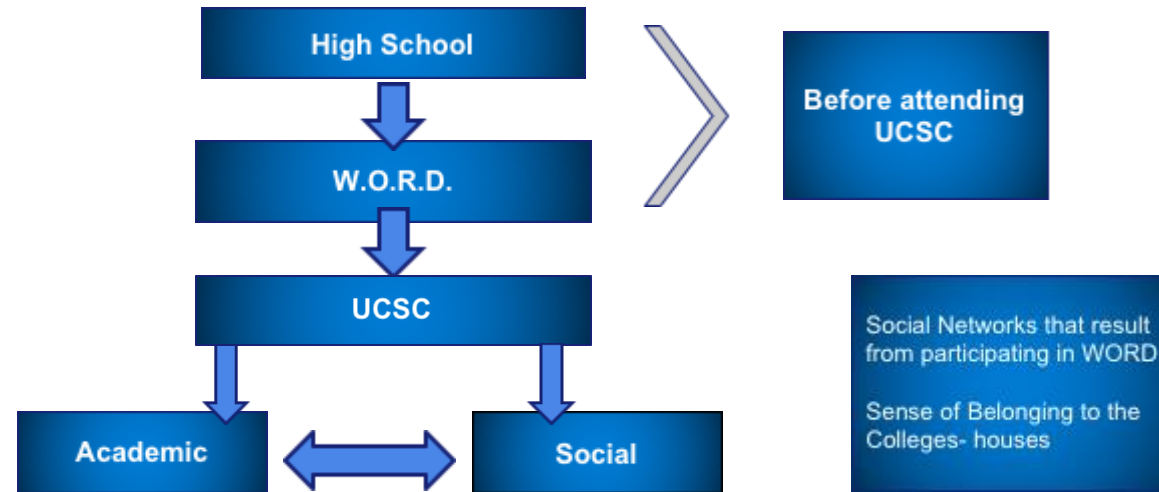
- WORD 2018 Student

Data courtesy of Andrea Vazquez, M.A., Chancellor's Graduate Intern





# “Acculturation” Schema



Data courtesy of Andrea Vazquez, M.A., Chancellor’s Graduate Intern



# W.O.R.D. Qualitative Data - Social & Academic Interaction

When I came to orientation, I was like damn. For me, I can only speak for my experience. In high school I was involved and did programs and go to different campuses and meet people and knew how this "diversity" thing was gonna be... that I'm a minority type of thing. But then I came here and it's like, this is not just a one week program, its kinda like for the rest of my four years. It hit me and I was like fuck. Like damn, I'm really here. And it's a good thing but it's kinda.. like the question.. I belong here? And now, these few weeks, I'm joining groups and its kinda finding myself and you know I do belong here, I'm gonna be here, going to make a change. - WORD 2018 Student

Data courtesy of Andrea Vazquez, M.A., Chancellor's Graduate Intern



# W.O.R.D. Qualitative Data - Social & Academic Interaction

So yeah obviously this place has more white people than Hispanic and Latinx people. And yeah it's scary...but coming here I felt like so proud of myself cuz we are here representing us and our families and the countries we come from and being here it's like wow, and it makes me feel good that I'm representing where I come from. - WORD 2018 Student

Data courtesy of Andrea Vazquez, M.A., Chancellor's Graduate Intern



# W.O.R.D. Qualitative Data - Social & Academic Interaction

WORD helped me understand more about myself. I learned that it's okay to not know everything, it's okay to not be at the same vocabulary level that someone else has, **because we are all here learning.** I feel like WORD made me feel more comfortable. **In the classroom that we were in, I was really comfortable.** We made so many friends and we all bounced ideas off of each other so it helped me be more comfortable. It's okay that I don't know everything because **I am here to learn.** It definitely gave me that **push.** - WORD 2018 Student

Data courtesy of Andrea Vazquez, M.A., Chancellor's Graduate Intern



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# W.O.R.D. Qualitative Data - Social & Academic Interaction

I don't feel like I have to be a part of it [UCSC culture] in order to move on and go through school. You get me? When you say culture, I imagine the classroom culture or walking around. I feel like I don't have to feel a part of the "talking-like-that" culture in order to be part of the school.

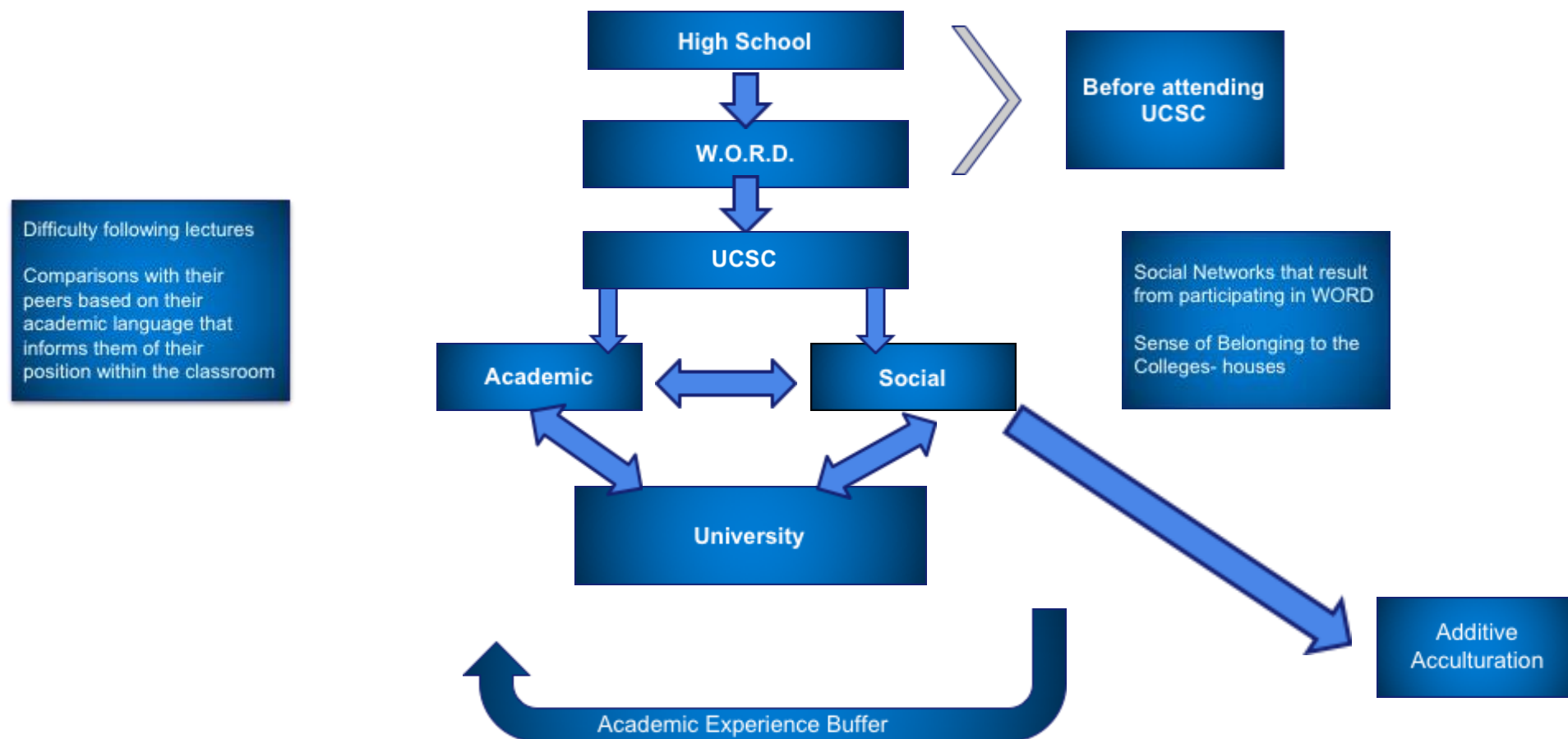
I don't feel like excluded from it but I also don't feel like I belong in it. I am kind of in limbo... I have a friend, he is a Philosophy major and sometimes he says these words and I'm like "he definitely just made that up, there's no way that's a real word!" I actually love it and I love the feeling of being friends with someone, who knows all this. If I ask him to define the word, he doesn't make me feel stupid or like he is on another level, even though he kind of is. He will just explain it to me and we will carry on and keep having our conversations. I have met a lot of people like that and I guess it's motivation. I really like it. I am intrigued by it and drawn to it and I want to keep learning and I want to get to the point where I am that one person explaining words to someone else.

- WORD 2018 Student

Data courtesy of Andrea Vazquez, M.A., Chancellor's Graduate Intern



# “Acculturation” Schema



Data courtesy of Andrea Vazquez, M.A., Chancellor’s Graduate Intern

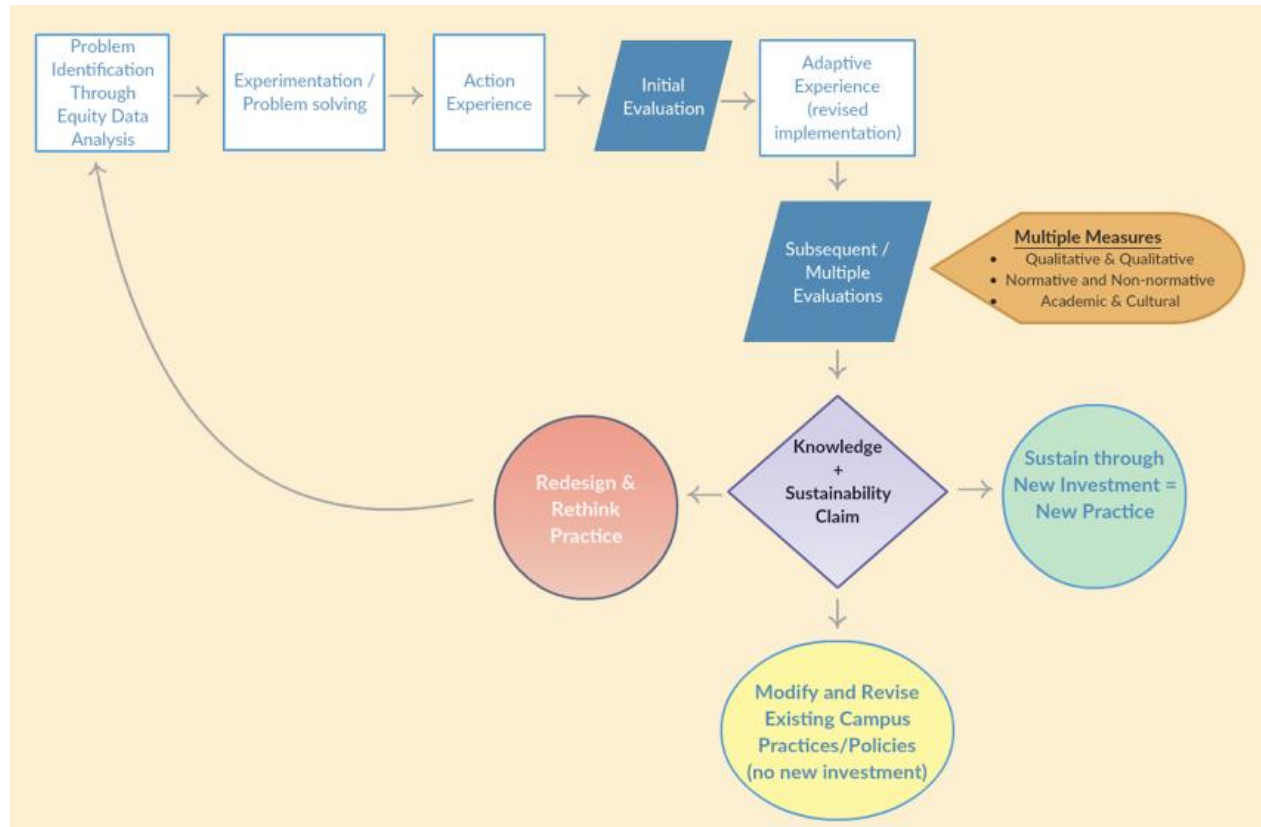


# Major Takeaways

- WORD is effective in **transition** from Highschool to College (Socially and Academically)
- Students report that the most useful skills gained are:
- Annotations (use of symbols, and highlighting)
- Pre-reading brainstorms (Metacognitively)
- Post readings summaries
- WORD students have a strong sense of belonging to UCSC
- College Affiliation
- Participation in social and academic school organizations
- Strong understanding of the resources available at UCSC
- Decentralized writing program may decrease the effectiveness of WORD



# Sustainability Pathway





# Learning Outcomes

- How to utilize the concept of academic language to investigate the intersectionality of student experiences in the reading and writing domain.
- How to leverage from data to help practitioners make informed decisions about program improvement.
- How to evaluate a reading and writing program as it relates to students sense of belongingness.



# Learning Outcomes



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