

**Academic Resourcefulness and Transfer Student Success: Direct Entry,
College Transfer, and University Transfer Student Comparisons:
Executive Summary**

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Executive Summary

A previous study (Drewes, Maki, Lew, Willson & Stringham, 2012) funded by the College-University Consortium Council found that, after controlling for program and demographic variables, college transfer students entering through an articulation agreement (CAAT Transfer and Articulation) attained significantly higher grades and were significantly less likely to drop-out (i.e., had a higher retention rate) than students entering directly out of high school (High School), whereas transfer students entering outside of an articulation agreement (CAAT Transfer non-articulation) and those involved in a university transfer program (CAAT Transfer University Transfer Program) were comparable to the High School group in terms of academic performance and retention. There is growing evidence (ONCAT, 2013) that college transfer students are performing well at university, yet the question remains as to what factors contribute to the overall successful performance of the CAAT Transfer students at university.

The Model of Academic Resourcefulness, shown in Figure 1, guided the research. Studies show that, in everyday life, individuals having a large repertoire of general learned resourcefulness persevere with challenges, and use problem solving strategies and positive self-talk to deal with challenges and/or to subside anxieties (Rosenbaum, 1980; 1989; 1990; 2000). We also know that highly generally resourceful students are more likely to be very academically resourceful (Kennett 1994; Kennett & Keefer, 2006; Kennett & Reed, 2009), in that they set goals, think positively despite demands or challenges, rely on information and assistance from both social and non-social (e.g., the library) sources, keep records, structure their environment to make learning easier, apply self-consequences (e.g., rewards), and review written material. Even when they do poorly on a test or assignment, they remain optimistic, evaluate the possible reasons for the failure, and restructure study goals and strategies (Kennett & Keefer, 2006; Reed, Kennett, et al., 2009; 2011). In short, they are neither likely to give up nor succumb to anxiety. Instead, they look for ways to rectify the problem and are efficacious that they have what it takes to succeed. Recent research also shows that these students are not only better integrated into the university environment both socially and academically, their reasons for attending university are for more internal reasons (e.g., they like learning, attend for the challenge) and less so to please others and to delay responsibilities (Kennett, Reed & Lam, 2011, Kennett, Reed & Stuart, 2013).

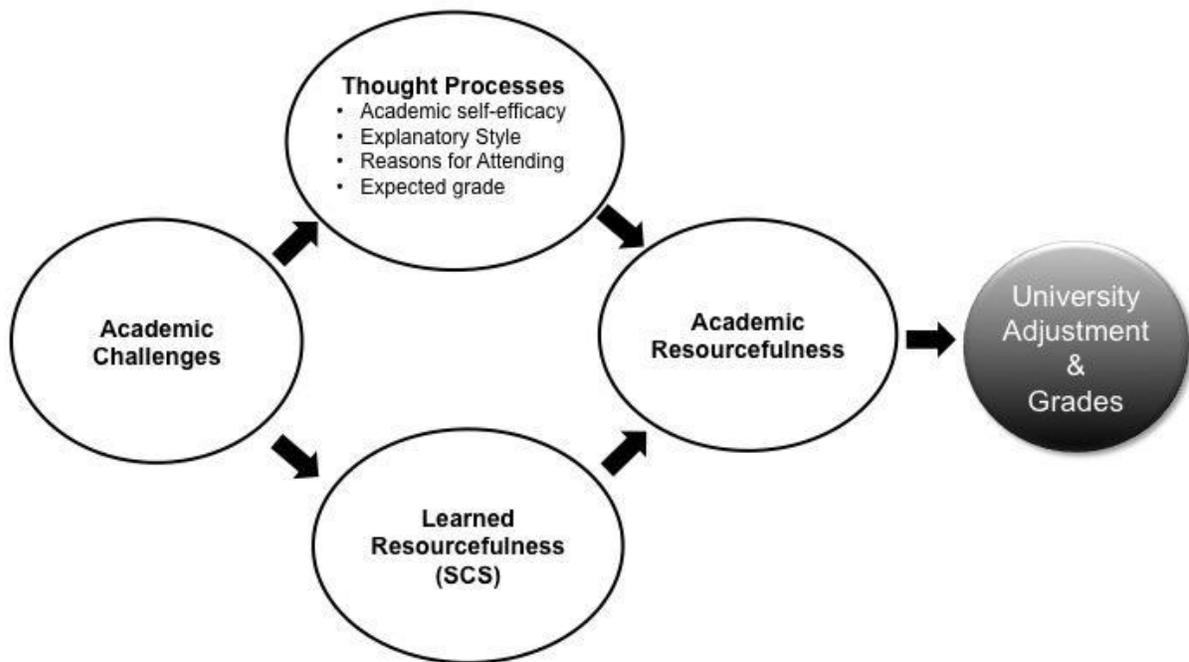


Figure 1. Model of Academic Resourcefulness

Specific research questions of the current project included: What are the factors predicting academic resourcefulness and grades? Based on past investigations (e.g., Kennett, 1994; Kennett & Keefer, 2006, Kennett, Reed et al., 2013), it was expected that the more highly academically resourceful students would be more generally resourceful, have higher academic self-efficacy beliefs, be attending university for more internal reasons and less so to please others and to delay responsibilities, and have an explanatory style that attributes failure to task difficulty and not because of lack of personal effort or ability. Academic resourcefulness was also expected to be a strong and direct predictor of grade performance. We also asked if the psychosocial profiles of university transfer, college transfer students and students entering directly from high school differed. And, do the factors predicting academic resourcefulness, adjustment, and grades differ among the groups?

Our findings revealed that college and university transfer students are well prepared for academic success. Multiple regression analyses of the predictors of academic resourcefulness, university adjustment, and final grades, for each of the groups, replicated findings reported in the literature (e.g., Kennett, 1994; Kennett & Keefer, 2006; Kennett, Reed, et al., 2013; Reed et al.,

2009). Similar to their direct entry student counterparts, being generally and academically resourceful and efficacious about one's academic abilities is key to success and university adjustment for both college and university transfer students, too. Further, and consistent with recent studies (ONCAT, 2013), our findings debunk the deficits based myth about college transfer students not being prepared for university-level study. We also observed that, in contrast to university transfers and direct entry students who have more discretionary time, college transfer students spend considerably more time working for pay off campus, and are more responsible for the care of dependents. The practical implications of this study are obvious. Educators and academic administrators need to focus on students' strengths versus perceived weaknesses, and be cognizant of students' differing life profiles. Especially for some college transfer students, scheduled events during the day or evening may be unattainable due to work and family responsibilities. Reaching out in different ways to these and other students having similar circumstances may serve to enhance their participation and experience. For example, our findings suggest that engaging transfer students through academic advising as opposed to traditional orientation events may be fruitful. Finally, our findings suggest that college to university transfer may be a particularly promising pathway to increase male participation in university.