

at the  
**COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
*level*

A two-tiered study proposing relevant, relationship-based, academic literacy education for parenting students as a model of a replicable, pathways-focused, accelerated developmental English sequence.

## Proposal overview: Mother Tongue Project @ the community college level

**Student population** • students who are parenting and/or caretaking dependents

**Curriculum + classroom** • highly supported, topic-centered, accelerated course sequence bridging developmental-level English and first-level, college-credit English courses

**Research study** • four-term assessment: successes, improvements, replicability, community college pathways, use of multiple-measures placement assessments

**Why: Barriers**

- significant developmental education needs
- high demands on time and finances
- prolonged degree-credit access + higher dropout rates
- disproportionate generational poverty, lack of educational access

**Why: Solutions**

- accelerated access to degree-program classes (first-level college English is a gateway prerequisite for most college degree pathways)
- cohort, co-requisite, linked sequence models + communities of support
- academic literacy skills support success in all disciplines
- multi-generation investment in earning potential and family wellbeing



*A mother's reading skill is the greatest determinant  
of her children's future academic success.*

- NIH-funded study, 2010

## Numbers

Fraction of US undergraduates who are parenting: **1/5**

Local community college parenting students, if adapting national number: **1,248**

Parenting undergraduates who are single women: **21 million**

Single mothers earning a credential or degree in 6 years: **28%**

Reduction in chance of poverty per additional education level: **32%**

Percentage of Santa Fe Public Schools high schoolers proficient in reading: **34%**

Entering Santa Fe Community College students requiring developmental English courses: **67%**

2020 jobs requiring a certificate or college degree: **61%**

New Mexico adults with an associates degree or higher: **29%**

## *Equity = why this is critical*

A notable segment of local community-college populations enter post-secondary studies as underprepared parenting students—students for whom academic literacy poses both obstacles to—and, importantly, **opportunities for—academic and economic opportunity and increased family and community wellbeing.**

## Curriculum + classroom

MTP@CC proposes an alternative English sequence for parenting students that **centers relevant materials and relationship-supported rigor** as key to successfully **accelerating a developmental-to-college level progression**.

- Lived experience is valued and linked to academic study and literacy skills.
- Ideally, the same cohort of students enrolls in each course as a sequence.
- Placement test results *and* multiple-measures criteria determine class size.

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### Instructional Requirements

Second-level developmental English course + integrated reading lab

*as* MTP@CC S1 = 5 credit hours

First-level college-credit English + course reading/support lab (as needed)

*as* MTP@CC S2 = 3-5 credit hours

*Although low-income single mothers face a daunting combination of barriers to educational achievement, colleges [...] have shown how a variety of interventions can break down these barriers and allow students to succeed.*

*—Ascend Aspen Institute*

## Instructional + institutional impact

### Parenting students:

- Faster progression through gateway English and into degree-level credits
- Consistency: One teacher guides an experience-based cohort over two terms
- Positive school-life feedback loop: Lived experiences valued as worthy of academic inquiry increase educational relevance and higher retention rates
- Community: collaborations and mentorships; multi-generational family literacy

### Community College:

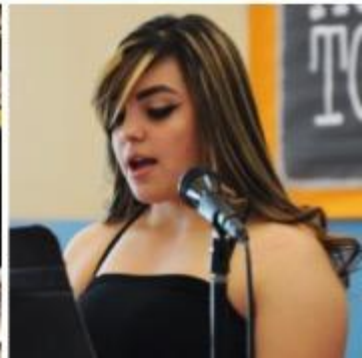
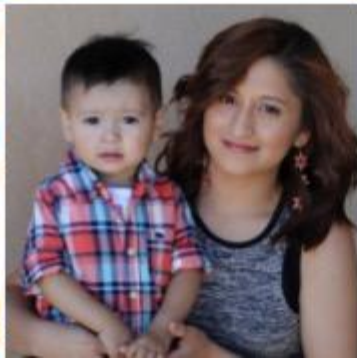
- Student-centered education that responds to community and employer needs
- Active acknowledgement of links among lived experience and academic rigor
- Community engagement and workforce development opportunities
- Research contributions and replicable models for supporting parenting students
- Equity and strengths centered, culturally-relevant pedagogy and materials





## Mother Tongue Project @ Community College

An intentionally responsive, equitable college learning experience centering relationship-based academic literacy education in order to bridge parenting students' life experiences to greater academic success and retention



## “Numbers” Citations

1. “Student Parent Success Initiative.” IWPR 2020, Institute for Women's Policy Research, 16 Aug. 2020, [iwpr.org/higher-education-spsi/](http://iwpr.org/higher-education-spsi/). “Roughly four million college students are parents of children under 18—70 percent of whom are mothers.”
2. “Santa Fe Community College Enrollment Data.” *Santa Fe Community College Data and Analysis*, Santa Fe Community College, 31 Oct. 2019, [www.sfcc.edu/data-and-analysis/enrollment-data/](http://www.sfcc.edu/data-and-analysis/enrollment-data/). The “headcount” number, versus the credit-students number, seems most applicable here since many parenting students enrolled at SFCC begin with developmental education.
3. “Student Parent Success Initiative.” IWPR 2020, Institute for Women's Policy Research, 16 Aug. 2020, [iwpr.org/higher-education-spsi/](http://iwpr.org/higher-education-spsi/).
4. *Single Moms Success*, Education Design Lab, 9 Feb. 2021, [eddesignlab.org/project/singlemomssuccess/](http://eddesignlab.org/project/singlemomssuccess/). “Only 28% of single mother learners earn a degree or credential within 6 years, but each additional level of education they complete decreases their chances of living in poverty by 32%.”
5. *Single Moms Success*, Education Design Lab, 9 Feb. 2021, [eddesignlab.org/project/singlemomssuccess/](http://eddesignlab.org/project/singlemomssuccess/).
6. “Child Wellbeing Indicators & Data: KIDS COUNT Data Center.” *KIDS COUNT Data Center: A Project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation*, Annie E Casey Foundation, 2020, [datacenter.kidscount.org/data#NM/2/0/char/0](http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#NM/2/0/char/0).
7. Mangelsdorf, Kate. “Developmental Education in New Mexico.” *New Mexico Higher Education Department Report*, 19 March 2018, <https://ncte.org/report/developmental-education-new-mexico/>. “The remediation rate is highest in New Mexico’s community colleges. At Santa Fe Community College, 67% of entering students need to take Developmental English, while 76% need to take Developmental Math. The rate is higher at community colleges in less affluent areas of the state. For instance, at Luna Community College in Las Vegas, NM, 71% of entering students need to take Developmental English courses, and 98% need to take Developmental Math.”  
2021 update:  
[https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/education/santa-fe-public-schools-graduation-rate-soars-but-graduates-succeed-up-in-air/article\\_08ec9b34-cfe2-11eb-af90-c7350bdf633d.html](https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/education/santa-fe-public-schools-graduation-rate-soars-but-graduates-succeed-up-in-air/article_08ec9b34-cfe2-11eb-af90-c7350bdf633d.html)
8. Complete College America, 2011, *Time Is the Enemy*, [completercollege.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Time\\_Is\\_the\\_Enemy.pdf](http://completercollege.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Time_Is_the_Enemy.pdf). Part 3: New Mexico
9. *ibid*