



Pathways

**GUIDED PATHWAYS DEMYSTIFIED:
TOP QUESTIONS PRACTITIONERS ASK
ABOUT GUIDED PATHWAYS
IMPLEMENTATION**

Rob Johnstone, Founder & President, NCII

Exploring *Guided Pathways Demystified*

Dr. Rob Johnstone
AACC Regional Pathways Workshop
Denver, Colorado
October 2019



NNATIONAL
CCENTER FOR
INQUIRY &
IMPROVEMENT




Taking the Pulse: Poll Questions



NNATIONAL
CCENTER FOR
IINQUIRY &
IIMPROVEMENT

www.ncii-improve.com




Demystifying Guided
Pathways One:
Exploring Ten Commonly
Asked Questions about
Implementing Pathways



Demystifying Guided Pathways Paper

- Released November 2015 by NCII
- Companion to excellent CCRC Book
- Available at <http://www.ncii-improve.com/publications-resources>
- Designed to address questions NCII, CCRC, JFF, and Public Agenda have heard in hundreds of guided pathways sessions with faculty, student services professionals and administrators
- Not the defining word – just food for thought!





Demystifying Guided Pathways Two: Exploring Ten More Operational Questions About Implementing Pathways



Mel Brooks' *History of the World Part 2*: I give You These 10...No...20 Questions...

- But wait, are there more?
- Collected questions for a sequel, given my profit margin on the first paper...
- Title - *Guided Pathways Demystified II: Addressing New Questions as the Movement Gains Momentum*
- Explored starting in Aug 2016 in CBD Blog posts
- Paper Released October 2017





What are Practitioners' Top Questions about Guided Pathways?



NATIONAL
CENTER FOR
INQUIRY &
IMPROVEMENT

www.ncii-improve.com

First 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

- Q1 - Isn't college a meritocracy, where the strong / smart succeed, and the weak / underprepared don't succeed?
- Q2 - Isn't "free choice" the cornerstone of American higher education?
- Q3 – Won't we sacrifice quality when we move to guided pathways?
- Q4 – Won't we lose the heart of a liberal arts education when we make students' journeys more structured?
- Q5 – Won't faculty lose control over what is taught in their discipline?



First 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

- Q6 – Won't we lose enrollment if we decrease swirl with increased structure or by making things mandatory?
- Q7 – Isn't all of this "hand-holding" going to create graduates that can't navigate the workplace / real world?
- Q8 – Don't students benefit when they "find themselves" by what looks like wandering to an observer?
- Q9 – How can students be expected to make career decisions at age 18?
- Q10 – Don't students change careers 4 to 7 times – why then guided pathways?



The Next 10 Questions about Guided Pathways

- Q11 - Isn't guided pathways just the next educational fad?
- Q12 -How do we further emphasize equity and inclusion in the pathways approach?
- Q13 - How do we build effective guided pathways for part-time students?
- Q14 - What happens when students are below transferrable English and Math?
- Q15 - What happens if students change their minds? Do they have to start over?



The Next 10 Questions about Guided Pathways

- Q16 - What should the institution do when students fall off their guided pathway?
- Q17 - How does a focus on teaching & learning need to evolve / shift under a guided pathways approach?
- Q18 - Doesn't faculty workload go up under a guided pathways model? Aren't we already overworked enough?
- Q19 - How do we best use technology to keep students on the pathways?
- Q20 - How can we get all the work necessary to plan and execute guided pathways done by (insert date here)?





Crowdsourcing Questions to Explore...



NNATIONAL
CCENTER FOR
IINQUIRY &
IIMPROVEMENT

www.ncii-improve.com

Which questions do you want to explore?

- Go to <http://slido.com>
- Enter the event code Rob123 in the “#” box
- Question #1 – Which two GPDM questions are the most TOP-OF-MIND to you personally this morning?
- Question #2 – Which two GPDM questions are the MOST DIFFICULT to address at your college?





GPDM Exploration Slides



NNATIONAL
CCENTER FOR
IINQUIRY &
IIMPROVEMENT

www.ncii-improve.com

First 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q1 - Isn't college a meritocracy, where the strong / smart succeed, and the weak / underprepared / unmotivated don't succeed?

- Model of higher education relatively unchanged
- Income quartile and college graduation rates of similarly high-achieving students
- Haven't tested the limits of potential changes such as guided pathways – CUNY, Georgia State data



First 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q2 – Isn't "free choice" the cornerstone of American higher education?

- Behavioral economics and social psychology research on number of choices and rationality
- Existence of degree audit programs
- Choice architecture / career interest areas – Queensborough, City College Chicago, ASU, Lorain
- Picking courses vs. picking programs



First 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q3 – Won't we sacrifice quality when we move to guided pathways?

- Foothill's Four C's as a model for GE / liberal arts outcomes
- Assessment paradigms challenged to establish current quality
- Employer feedback surveys suggest issues exist
- 10 to 14 GE courses under both models
- Random assignment of GE package vs. "fit"



First 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q4 – Won't we lose the heart of a liberal arts education when we make students' journeys more structured?

- **Argument that liberal arts outcomes more impt. now**
- **10 to 14 GE Courses break down into areas – business, natural science, humanities, social sciences, mathematics, English**
- **Same number of humanities (or any other area) under guided pathways vs. cafeteria model**
- **Program faculty identify GE electives for best alignment for students in their programs**



First 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q5 – Won't faculty lose control over what is taught in their discipline?

- Faculty control already shifting with transfer pathways and articulation agreements
- Ownership over what is taught in programs vs. individual courses
- Faculty teaching preferences vs. ensuring courses will be applicable / keep students on path



First 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q6 – Won't we lose enrollment at our college if we decrease swirl with increased structure or by making things mandatory?

- CC enrollments largely down since 2011-12
- No drops at MDC, GTCC & others implementing guided pathways / mandatory features
- Changes can only be opposed by current students
- Potential to increase units / student significantly



First 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q7 – Isn't all of this “hand-holding” going to create graduates that can't navigate the workplace / real world?

- Value of systems that those who work in higher education have trouble navigating
- Complexity dissuades students – especially students of color / first time in college students – that data shows us could succeed under right conditions
- Potential to exacerbate race, class and income equality – issues of social capital



First 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q8 – Don't students benefit when they “find themselves” by what looks like wandering to an observer?

- Most students don't want to wander – research studies by RP (CA), Public Agenda (IN), and CBD
- Works for some who can afford to – not as often for low-income students and FTIC
- Taking courses as way of finding oneself inefficient
- Those who “found themselves” tend to be us



First 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q9 – How can students be expected to make career decisions at age 18? and Q10 – Don't students change careers 4 to 7 times – why then guided pathways?

- Common coursework leading into multiple options
- GP provides more clarity on career selection
- GP can focus attention on GE skills that will help students navigate careers and career changes
- Most importantly, let's get students into and prepared for careers vs. dropping out and taking jobs by getting them to complete / transfer at higher rates



Next 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q11 – What makes guided pathways different (from other educational fads)?

- Movement, not an initiative
- Thinking of it as a framework that
 - (a) brings together existing approaches
 - (b) inspires bolder, more substantive change
- Use as an umbrella between series of disconnected initiatives
- 4 "Big Ideas" serving as pillars over time



Next 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q12- How do we further emphasize equity and inclusion in the guided pathways approach?

- Guided pathways is fundamentally about ensuring equity of substantially improved student outcomes
- Georgia State story – equity; changing the college rather than changing the student; student lives affected
- Focus on a livable wage and a career path that enables students to sustain early economic gains
- Direct GP efforts towards improving success of middle 2/3 of students (transfers and cohort-based CTE)



Next 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q13 - How do we build effective guided pathways for part-time students?

- **60%+ of students enroll part-time, but completion rate is abysmal**
- **Full-time enrollment = higher completion rate, but why are students not enrolling full-time?**
 - ✓ **Value proposition problem, students are unsure of what they are getting for their investment**
 - ✓ **Student financial stability focus (tying to public benefits, emergency assistance, nutrition, transportation, childcare) would help increase full-time enrollment**
- **Part-time students need structured pathways and support even more**



Next 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q14 - What happens when students are below transferrable English and/or math upon entry?

- Consider acceleration and “co-requisite” programs
- Need to make sure students are taking the right math and English classes for their pathway
- Think strategically about what skills students truly need to develop in alignment with those goals and select coursework accordingly
- For students who do need dev ed, focus on what courses they can take to make forward progress



Next 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q15 - What happens if students change their minds about their program of study? Do they have to start over?

- Simply put, if students change their mind, they do not have to start over
- Students and advisors would need to figure out which of their completed courses follow them as completed GE requirements for their new program of study
- Meta-majors and career-focus areas allow students to explore interests earlier while meeting requirements
- GP are designed to help students make more informed decisions from day one



Next 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q16 - What should our college do when students fall off their guided pathway?

- Consider the reasons why – is a student still going within a pathway or exploring changing pathways
- Clear intervention strategies for when students do fall off the pathway
 - ✓ Ongoing advising and integrated support
 - ✓ Use of summer terms, incomplete grades, independent study, online courses for catch-up
- Learn strategies from cohort-based CTE programs



Next 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q17 - How does teaching and learning need to evolve under a guided pathways approach?

- **Primary focus is the shift from focus on courses to focus on programs**
- **Create more alignment between program-level, liberal arts, and GE outcomes**
- **Integration of experiences into coursework**
- **Authentic assessment of students' achievement of program-level outcomes**



Next 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q18 - How much will faculty workload increase under a guided pathways model?

- **Workload in development vs. workload when GP is in place**
- **Early GP pioneers report no workload changes once the pathway is in place**
- **Some increased emphasis on traditionally “outside of the classroom” discussions and activities**
- **Faculty advisors have an easier time working with a GP map than current student transcripts**



Next 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q19 - How do we best use technology to keep students on their pathways?

- Colleges need to have an idea of how to use technology before buying it
- Simple modifications in technology use could serve as a catalyst for improvement
- Cuyahoga (OH) – Year-long enrollment codes
- Assessment of local needs
- AACC Pathways Partners Paper – also on NCII website



Next 10 FAQs - Redesigning for Completion

Q20 - How can we get all the work necessary to plan and execute guided pathways done by (*insert date here*)?

- Scale of Adoption Assessment- establish a baseline for each of the four domains
- Critical to create a project plan for each domain
 - ✓ Workgroup / taskforce structure with clear goals
- When changes are made, they are version 1.0 and will continue to adapt over time



Find Out More

- **NCII website with GPDM2 and other publications:**

www.ncii-improve.com/publications

- **Dr. Rob Johnstone, Founder & President, NCII**

rob@ncii-improve.com

