

The underestimated significance of practitioner knowledge in the scholarship on student success.

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The Review of Higher Education

Johns Hopkins University Press

Volume 30, Number 4, Summer 2007

pp. 441-469

[10.1353/rhe.2007.0032](https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2007.0032)

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Abstract

The scholarship on student success, particularly for minority groups, has two limitations. One is the lack of attention to practitioners' knowledge, beliefs, experiences, education, and feelings of self-efficacy as factors that influence student outcomes. The other derives from the traditional science assumption that the researcher produces generalized knowledge that is translatable into "best practices" that are implemented locally by practitioners. These epistemological limitations can be addressed by the conceptualization of a phronetic social science for higher education where practitioners assume the role of researchers and develop context-dependent knowledge and experience about how to facilitate student

The Review of Higher Education
Summer 2007, Volume 30, No. 4, pp. 441–469
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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

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Estela Mara Bensimon

In June of 2006, along with several colleagues from the New England Resource Center for Higher Education at the University of Massachusetts in Boston and at the University of Southern California's Center for Urban Education (CUE), I presented findings from a study of the transfer of low-income students from community colleges to prestigious institutions (Dowd, Bensimon, et al., 2006). The venue was "A Fresh Look at Equity

ESTELA MARA BENSIMON is Professor and Director, Center for Urban Education (CUE), at the University of Southern California, <http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CUE/>. This center is located in the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California and receives support from The James Irvine Foundation, The Ford Foundation, The Lumina Foundation for Education, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The Walter S. Johnson Foundation, and the Chancellor's Office for California Community Colleges. **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:** "I would like to thank friends and colleagues who assisted my performance of the ASHE Presidential Address and its subsequent translation into a formal paper. They are Ana M. Martinez Alemán, Alexander Astin, Hannah Oh Alford, Don Braswell, Dwight E. Giles Jr., Anna Neumann, Amaury Nora, Michael Olivas, Brian Pusser, Robert Rueda, and Frances K. Stage. Alicia Dowd provided many insightful suggestions, for which I am most grateful." Address queries to Estela Mara Bensimon, Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California, Rossier School of Education, WPH 702, Los Angeles, CA 90089-4037; telephone (213) 740-5202; fax: (213) 740-3889; email: bensimon@usc.edu.



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