



Beyond Capturing the Voice: Student Participatory Action Research (SPAR) at Cerro Coso Community College

Presenters:

Ryan Khamkongsay, College Institutional Researcher

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Presentation Goals and Outcomes

- **Increase understanding of CBPAR and its benefits across stakeholders across California Higher Ed Institutions**
- **Student Participatory Action Research is considered as an appropriate research approach by more college/university IR/IE Offices**
- **A “Community of Learning” is established on participatory inquiry and student engagement practices across California**

Cerro Coso — At a Glance

- **AY 2018-19 Unduplicated Student Headcount is 9,953**
- **Five (5) Physical Campuses**
- **Spans 18,000 sq. miles across four (4) CA Counties**
- **Total of 44 Service Area Zip Codes**
- **Statewide leader in Online/ Distance Education**
- **Statewide leader in Prison Education: Tehachapi CCI & California City Correctional Facility (CAC)**
- **Office of Institutional Research (OIR) established in 2017**



What is Community-based Participatory Action Research?

Community-based participatory research (CBPAR) is research conducted *by and for* those most directly affected by the issue, condition, situation. The data collected is intended to be used to create drive positive actions.

In Student Participatory Action Research, students are *equal collaborators* in the research process.

Benefits of CBPAR for OIRs

Institutional Research Offices that use CBPAR as a framework for research may be able to achieve:

- **Strengthened collaboration:** equitable partnerships of multiple stakeholder groups in all phases of research
- **Increased research buy-in:** that promotes action for the benefit of all
- **Incorporated students:** as subject matter experts (not just as a unit of analysis)
- **Build-on:** of research capacity and strengths of college OIRs

Benefits of CBPAR at California Higher Ed Institutions

Institutions that use CBPAR as a framework for research can achieve the following:

- **Promote joint learning, skill-sharing and capacity building among all partners (i.e. IR staff, faculty data champions, student leaders, etc.)**
- **Foster shared commitment in addressing the unique barriers to student success specific to your college**
- **Engage students in a long(er)-term process and enhancing their community college experience**

CREATING THE PLAN

Theoretical framework → Pedagogy → Curriculum design



Infusing CBPAR into Pedagogy

- ❖ Strong partnership between Institutional Research and Faculty is an *integral* part of the pedagogy of CBPAR at Cerro Coso.
- ❖ Adult Learning Theory/Learning pyramid
- ❖ The PAR praxis is offered as an experimental design/applied research course in selective post-grad and doctoral programs, Cerro Coso is the first college to implement this form of CBPAR at the CA community-college level and formally introduce it as a promising practice.



[2018 Critical PAR Summer Institute,
Public Science Project at CUNY]

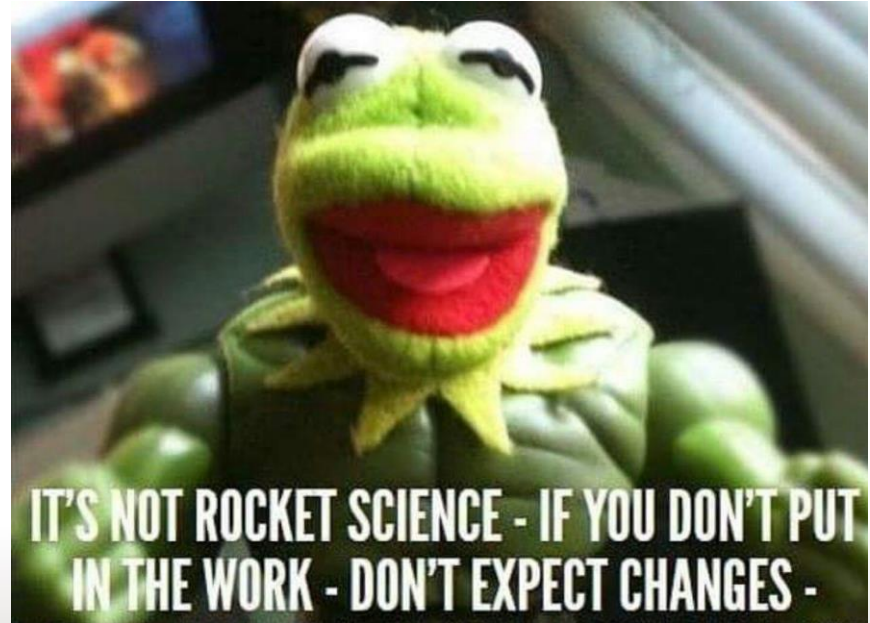
Ryan Khamkongsay (College Institutional Researcher)
Nakysa Cummings (Professor of Psychology and Sociology)
Alec Griffin (Associate Professor of Anthropology and
Sociology)

How do you choose the 'right' pilot course for CBPAR?

Qualities of an ideal course:

Class has a pre-existing component or focus on research, such as Basic Research Methods, Social Science Statistics, Cultural Anthropology, Library Sciences, etc.

*It's important to note that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' course to pilot CBPAR. The only criteria is a class and partnerships committed to leveraging research to *create meaningful change*.



Community-Based Participatory Action Research Timeline (Phase I)

Fall 2018 | Course PSYC C271

CBPAR Phase	When is this happening?	Who is involved?
Introduction to CBPAR	Week of 10/22	All
Examining the issues	Week of 10/29	All
Formulating a research question		
Training on research Methods	Week of 11/5	All
Planning the study		
Collecting data	Week of 11/12 Week of 11/19	Student Researchers
Analyzing data	Week of 11/26	All
Final Report Out	Finals Week	Student Researchers
Developing actions based on the data collected	Spring 2019	TBD

Curriculum Infusion

Three:

Read Ch. 3, Planning Research: Generating a Question Research Topic Due in Discussion Forum

Four:

Read Ch. 4, Practical Issues in Planning Your Research

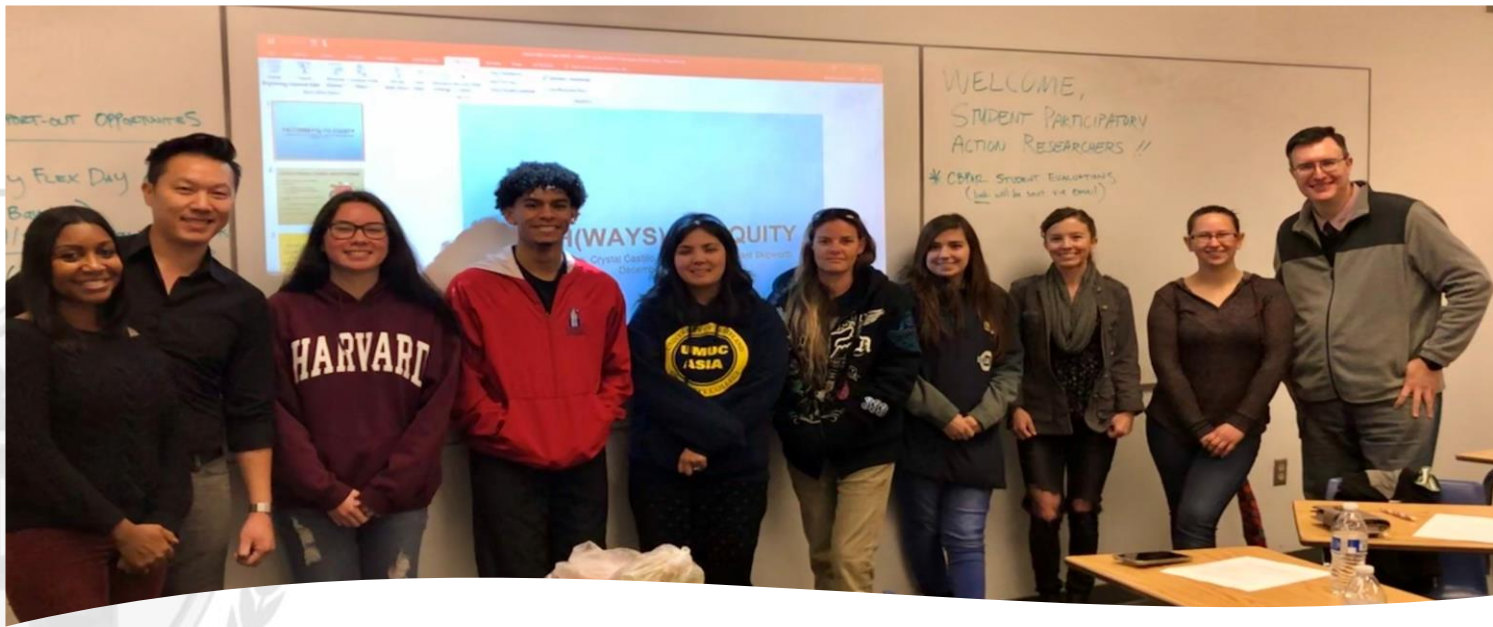
Five:

Read Ch. 5, Measurement and Sampling
Literature review

Six-Eight:

Read Ch. 6, Conducting an Experiment (Focus Group workshop)

Read Ch. 14, Considering Cultural and Individual Differences



The Fall-18 Research Methods Team

Theory to Implementation: Phase One

SPAR Pilot at Cerro Coso (Phase I, Fall 2018)



- **Recruited:** Students in the Fall 2018 PSYC C271 course are recruited into the SPAR Pilot Project (Phase I), which has CBPAR praxis integrated into the curriculum.
- **Trained:** Students learned basic research methods from course professor and received hands-on training/coaching on mixed-methods data collection from IR staff.
- **Aligned:** Students developed research questions and co-designed projects to be in direct alignment with two CCC student success initiatives: Student Equity and Guided Pathways.

How does SPAR relate to Student EQUITY?

SPAR is intentionally designed to increase equitable research practices within institutions by closing participation gaps

SPAR Researchers can ask what can *WE* do to help?



Some may need more than others, to gain an **EQUAL** chance

SPAR Researchers Can ask what needs are *NOT* met?

How does SPAR relate to Guided PATHWAYS?

SPAR Researchers can ask:

What prevent students from staying on the path?

Stay on the Path

How do students find the path?

Enter The Path

GOAL!

what are the goals?

Clarify The Path

What is unclear about the path?

Student Centered Focus Groups of Phase I

In the fall semester of 2018, using these themes of Equity and Guided Pathways, students examined existing survey data and identified gaps surrounding Food Insecurity and Transfer Services.

Student Researchers developed and facilitated five (5) student-centered focus groups with Cerro Coso IWV students (n=39)*.

The ownership afforded to us as student researchers by this project model made us feel engaged and empowered in ways we never had before.

*Note: Focus Group sample size may include the duplicated counts of an individual student that participated in different sessions.



SPAR Pilot at Cerro Coso (Phase II, Spring 2019)

- Phase II *integrated CBPAR praxis* to strengthen the college's institutional research capacity.
- SPAR Members became paid **OIR Student Workers** for Phase II in Spring 2019
- SPAR worked collaboratively and applied their existing research skills towards developing and implementing a **large-scale mixed-methods Enrollment Research Study**
- This college-endorsed research project **examined a myriad of student success factors** related to Guided Pathways and Student Equity at Cerro Coso.
- Phase II was intentionally designed to incorporate at least one **"Data-to-Action"** outcome.

Community-Based Participatory Action Research Timeline (Phase II)

Community-Based Participatory Action Research Timeline Spring 2019 | SPAR Implementation

CB-PAR Phase II	When is this happening?	Who is involved?
Orientation to SPAR Members -Intro to IR data ethics -FERPA Training	Week One	SPAR Members and IR Staff
Dissemination of Fall-19 Research Findings at FLEX Day (Faculty PD) -Planning and practice -Presentation to Faculty	Week Two	SPAR Members, Faculty and IR Staff
Data-to-Action -Reflection Assignments -Presentations to Admin	Week Three	SPAR Members, Faculty and IR Staff
Dissemination Research Findings at RP Conference 2019 -Planning and practice -Creation of Poster Boards	Week Four	SPAR Members, Faculty and IR Staff

Community-Based Participatory Action Research Timeline (Phase II continued)

CB-PAR Phase II (cont.)	When is this happening?	Who is involved?
NEW Research Project – Enrollment Study	Week Four	SPAR Members and IR Staff
Planning the study -Co-designing research plan and timeline -Roles and responsibilities (Re)Training on research Methods -Focus Group Facilitation -Note-taking & Transcribing -Survey Design & SurveyMonkey	Weeks Five - Seven	SPAR Members, Faculty and IR Staff
Collecting data	Weeks Eight - Eleven	All
Analyzing data	Weeks Twelve – Fifteen	All
Training on Report Writing	Week Sixteen	SPAR Members and IR Staff
Final Report Out – All Staff Professional Development Day	Post-Commencement	All
Developing actions based on the data collected	Summer 2019	SPAR Members and IR Staff
Reflection & Evaluation	Summer 2019	SPAR Members, Faculty and IR Staff



SPAR Pilot Phase II: Highlights

- Student Researchers authored their own focus group questions
- Data Dissemination
- All Staff Professional Development Day Presentation
- Flex Day Sessions
- Student authored research briefs (2)
- Presentation and [Video Interview](#) at RP Conference

Data to Action

- ✓ Disseminate data to other student groups (i.e. student govt, Umoja, Latinos Unidos, etc.)
- ✓ Disseminate data to college committees (i.e. academic senate, Student Success Support Program Committee, etc.)
- ✓ Creation of summary report to aid in creation of food pantry
- ✓ Creation of summary report to aid in creation of an in-person Transfer Center and services offered

“Students respond to students, and the knowledge of what’s happening can improve or create resources for the students in need.”
-SPAR Student Researcher

“Student[s], community members, faculty. Each of these groups have a stake in the research and should actively be a part of the the conversation and action.”
-SPAR Student Researcher

OUTCOMES

A post-Phase evaluation survey tool using a 5-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly Agree) measured SPAR-member experiences across Four Main Areas:

- A. Benefits to Research Departments
- B. Benefits to Pathways and Equity
- C. Benefits to Student Researchers
- D. Room for Improvement



PSYC C271 Community-Based Participatory Action Research Pilot

This survey should take about 5 minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential, so please feel free to answer candidly. Thank you!

* 1. Did the CBPAR project enhance your overall PSYC C271 course experience?

- Yes
- No

* 2. Please check *all* the activities you have experienced in this CBPAR course

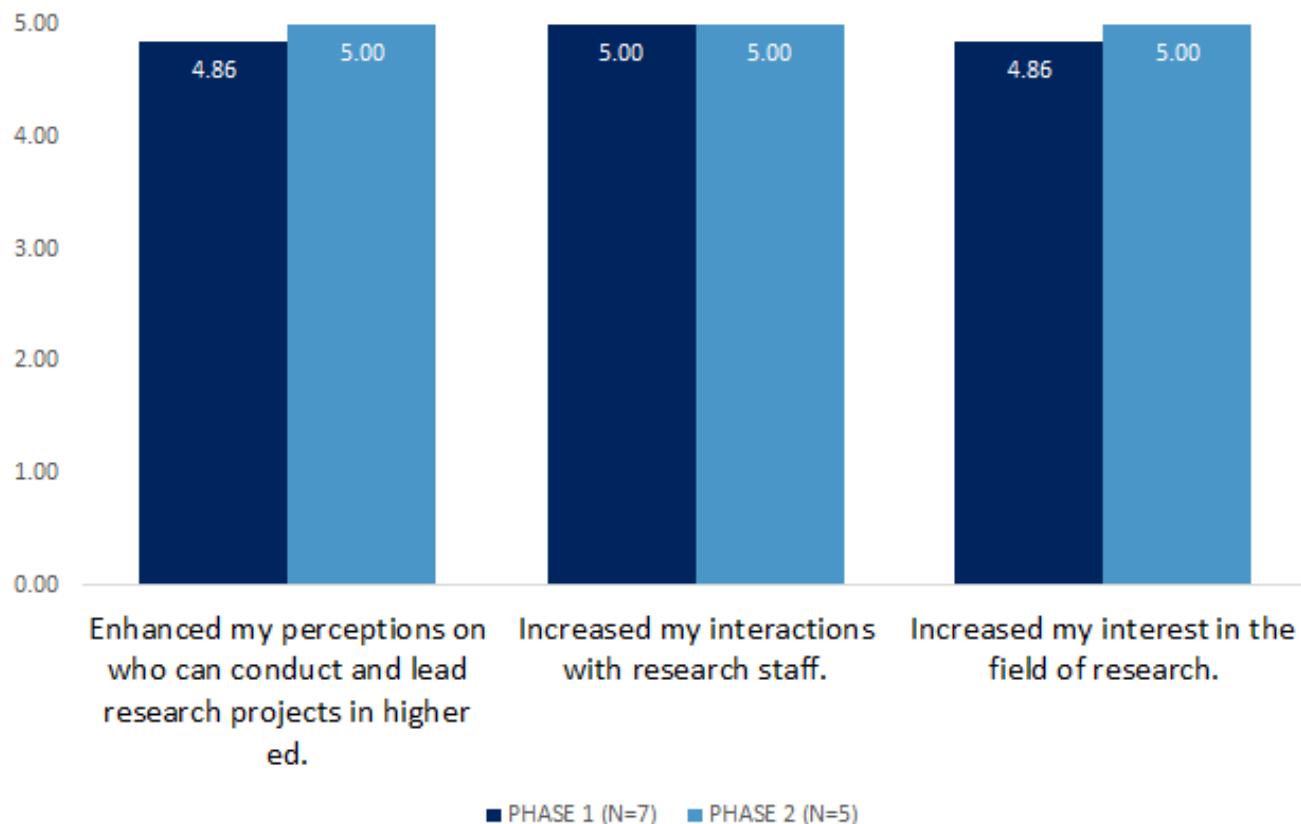
- Researched a problem / issue
- Reported CBPAR findings in class (orally, in writing, or via technological media)
- Attended meetings with community partners
- Reported CBPAR findings to policy-makers (orally, in writing, or via technological media)
- Interacted with community members and / or partners outside of meetings
- Presented CBPAR findings at a conference
- Participated in a community-based program / project
- Other (please specify)

* 3. Please choose the answer that best fits your experience in this course.

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Not Applicable |
|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|

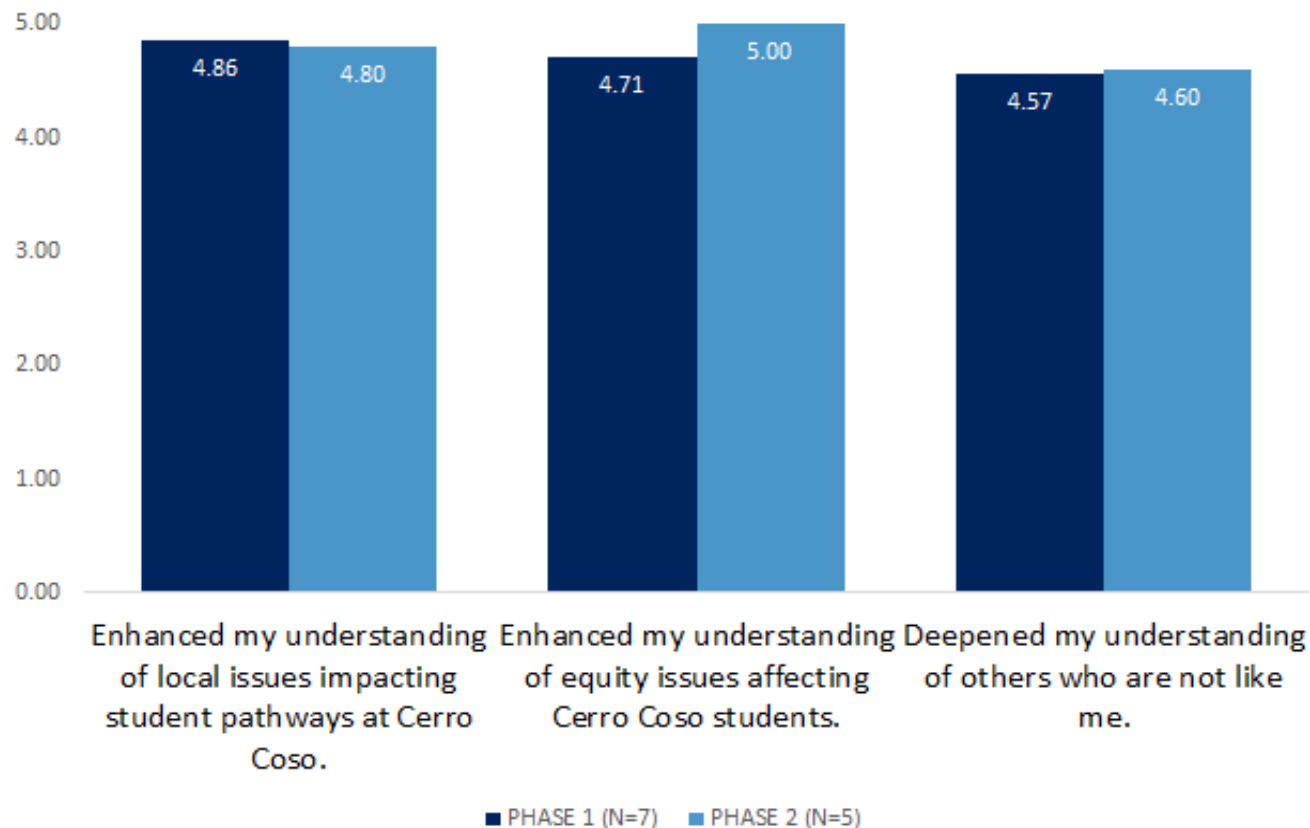
A.

Benefits to Research Departments



B.

Benefits to Pathways and Equity



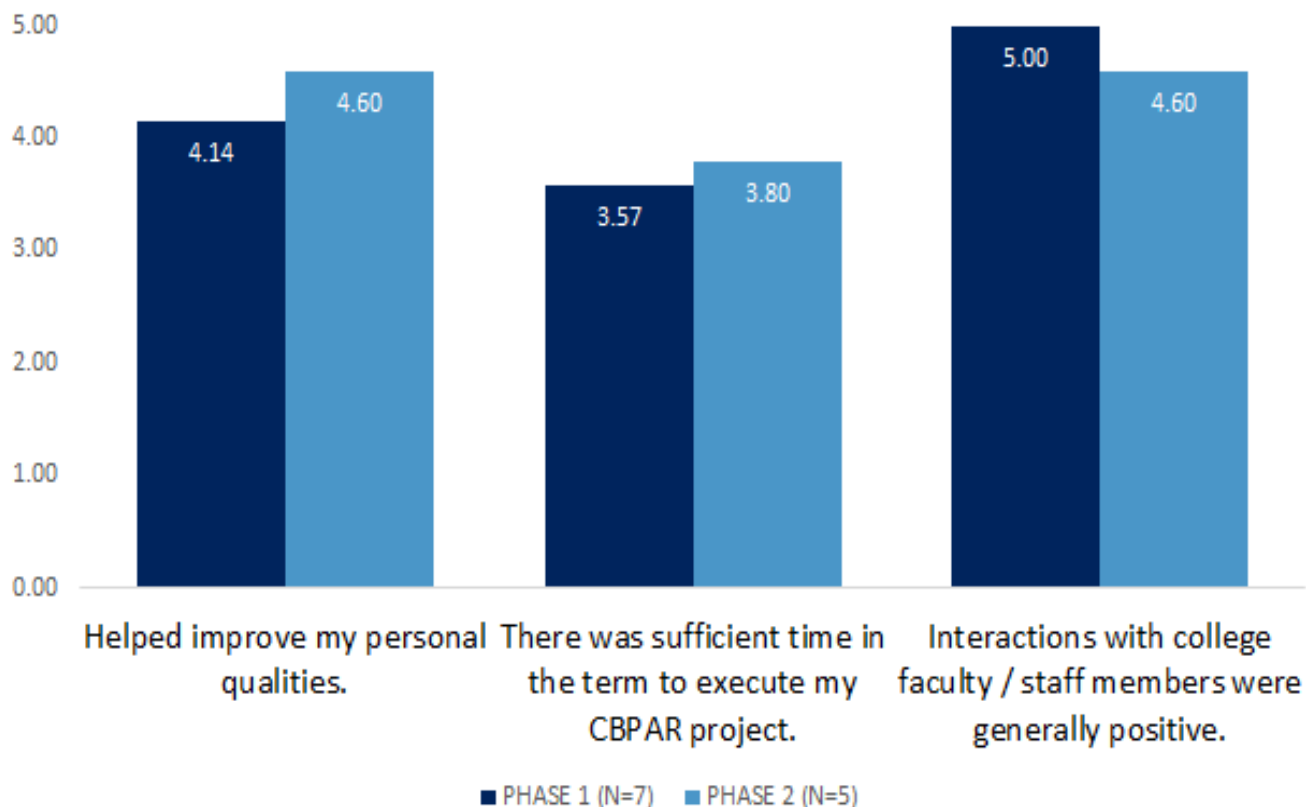
C. Unplanned Stat-boosts for SPAR student researchers:

- **+CHANGE** in power dynamics when students interact with faculty and college admin as an equal collaborator—they *know* they have an equal seat at the table
- **+GROWTH** in project management skills when students co-design and co-lead a *real* research project—they see *tangible* improvements in their career-readiness
- **+CONTROL** in solution-finding when students know they don't have to rely on the college to take steps toward creating positive outcomes for their success—they *can* help drive those actions!

D.



Room for Improvement



LESSONS LEARNED

Students | Faculty | IR Office



I learned that there isn't a set criteria of how a person becomes a researcher. That anyone can be a researcher as long as they have a motivation and drive. That there is no true limits or rules on what you do research on. You can ~~constantly~~ constantly keep doing researches to further expand, ~~and~~ ~~also~~ Once you do research you can look and see how it creates a positive outcome or how its improving a situation.

In the beginning, I learned about the basics of research, the foundation: sample size, methodology, ethics, target population. After attempting the SPAR project, it opened my eyes to who can do research. Students, community members, faculty. Each of these groups have a stake in the research and actively should be a part of the conversation and action. We're all researchers and all have the ability to help each other out to better our experiences.

Lessons Learned by SPAR Students

After participating in the SPAR project it opened my eyes to who can do research...we are all researchers and have the opportunity to better our experiences.

- Becoming a researcher is *not* an unattainable goal
- Get the word out early for focus groups
- Have plenty of practice for group facilitation, including role-play
- Incentivize your participants
- Students *will* trust students, so front-load privacy concerns
- Prepare for possible pushback

Lessons Learned by Faculty and OIR



Recruit from various pools of students



Implementing a SPAR pilot is a time intensive project



Strong partnership with Faculty and OIR is required to successfully implement a SPAR pilot



Be mindful of the intricate power dynamics and remain aware of the strengths and limitations of all parties involved



Students as active research collaborators throughout the process strengthen institutional research design




The student voice is a powerful tool to harness and advocate for institutional change

How ready is your institution?

- How strong are your relationships with faculty? OIR?
- What disciplines will pair well with SPAR initiatives
- What areas do you think CBPAR would be instrumental to strengthen student success?



What's the next step in SPAR's evolution?

- 
- **Facilitating SPAR in different modalities on-site and online**
 - **Infusion of SPAR to existing Honor Program specialty research projects**
 - **Hiring student workers to be SPAR researchers with embedded research trainings**

What are some resources?

Public Science Project: <https://publicscienceproject.org/>

Implementation Tools: http://bit.ly/CC_SPAR_Resources

**Cerro Coso's Short Guide to CPBAR at Community Colleges
(Coming Soon!!)**

Questions?



To continue the conversation...

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- Nakysa Cummings, Professor of Psychology at ncumming@cerrocoso.edu
- Ryan Khamkongsay, College Institutional Researcher at ryan.Khamkongsay@cerrocoso.edu
- Davis Kunz, Student Researcher at davis.kunz@cerrocoso.edu