

Effects of Early AP Coursetaking on High School Outcomes and College Enrollment for Less Academically Prepared Students

Han Bum Lee, Sofia Bahena, & Sharon L. Nichols
University of Texas at San Antonio

The expansion of Advanced Placement (AP) programs to include students from underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities and those from less advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds has made it crucial to assess how effective AP courses and exams are for these groups. As AP programs become more popular, more high school students—especially freshmen and sophomores—are signing up for AP courses. Despite this growing trend, there's still not enough research on how early AP participation affects these particular students. This study fills this research gap by exploring the benefits of early AP involvement for students considered academically underprepared based on prior test scores. We find that early AP course participation leads to higher scores on state exit exams, greater enrollment in early college credit courses, and increased college attendance and completion rates, particularly at four-year institutions. These findings challenge the reliance on prior test scores as the sole predictor of AP success and future academic achievements, suggesting a need for a more comprehensive approach to evaluating students' readiness for the rigors of AP coursework.

The full article is available at Education Policy Analysis Archives, <https://epaa.asu.edu/index.php/epaa/article/view/8651>, or you can contact Dr. Lee at hanbum.lee@utsa.edu.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was made possible by generous financial support from the 80|20 Foundation and the Faculty Research Award Programs at the College of Education and Human Development.