



SLOPE i3 Project

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

- Q. Is there a minimum number of students per district needed to participate in the SLOPE i3 project?
- A. No, there is no minimum number of students required. We are randomizing at the teacher level. Since randomization is at the teacher level, we are more concerned about the minimum number of teachers than students.
- Q. Should we encourage certain teachers to participate in the study?
- A. Participating districts are encouraged to recruit as many teachers as possible. This study is intended to see how diverse set of teachers performs within the parameters of the study criteria.
- Q. Is it possible to not have any teachers assigned to treatment?
- A. If only one teacher at your site is participating then that teacher will be assigned to either treatment or control. However, if there are two or more teachers participating at your site, they will be randomly assigned to treatment or control within the school, so approximately half of the teachers at each site will be treatment, the other half, control.
- Q. Can control teachers teach summer academy or extended day?
- A. No, control teachers CANNOT participate in any treatment activities until after the conclusion of the RCT study. The first training activity for control teachers will start the summer of 2014. The control teachers will be involved in providing data on themselves and collecting data on their 8th grade Algebra 1 classes during the Randomized Control Trial period of the project.
- Q. Will control teachers be compensated?
- A. Yes, control teachers will receive a \$750 stipend in 2012-2013, and a \$750 stipend in 2013-2014. At the end of the randomized control trial treatment teachers will receive an iPad2.
- Q. If a school elects to implement an extended day component, how will it be implemented?
- A. Funding is provided for teachers to provide one hour of extended day tutorial support per week for any student enrolled in a treatment class. However, schools are not required to offer extended day services.



Q. Do treatment teachers have to teach only Algebra 1 classes?

A. The treatment teachers have to teach at least one section of Algebra 1, but that does not exclude them from teaching other courses. We will only collect data from their Algebra 1 classes. If a teacher is assigned to the treatment condition, then all Algebra 1 sections that teacher has will be treatment classes.

Q. Our school is comprised of a regular school and a magnet school. The magnet Algebra teacher teaches both magnet and regular Algebra classes. Would both populations participate in the SLOPE i3 project? If teachers are selected randomly, would it be a biased sample if magnet students end up in the treatment group and others in control group or vice versa?

A. All students placed into Algebra 1 using that district guidelines for placement are eligible to participate in the study providing that Algebra 1 course leads to Geometry or Algebra 2 as the subsequent course. However, only those students assigned to classes taught by a teacher who volunteers to participate in the study will be included. Any teacher teaching a year-long Algebra 1 class is eligible for participation. Each teacher will have a 50-50 chance of being labeled as Treatment (T) or Control (C).

Q. Does the Algebra 1 class have to be all 8th grade students?

A. The class must be occurring in the 8th grade. If 7th grade students are placed in the class as a part of the normal district practice they can remain in the class, but their data (e.g., test scores) will be excluded from the study (i.e., they will not be part of the study). The student sample defined for this study is 8th grade students in Algebra 1 classes.

Q. If a 7th grade student takes Algebra 1 and then retakes it in 8th grade, can that student be in the study?

A. Yes, as long as the student is enrolled in an Algebra 1 course per district policy and he/she is currently in 8th grade.

Q. We follow our district's criteria to place students in the Algebra 1 course. Students who take Algebra are those who score Advanced, Proficient, and Basic on the California Standards Test (CST). However, not all students scoring at the Basic level enroll in Algebra. Depending on data analysis, some take Algebra Readiness. Are there any placement requirements for the project? Our concern is that if we are required to enroll Below Basic students in Algebra, students in the control group will not be receiving extra support and it might have a negative effect on our API.

A. There are not placement requirements beyond what your district requires, providing the Algebra 1 course leads to Geometry or Algebra 2 as the subsequent course. All of the Algebra 1 students in our project will be evaluated as a single cohort. While planned analyses may allow for disaggregation at the school level, effect will be reported for the entire cohort (all schools mixed together). We will make no effort to restrict who is in this cohort, regardless of CST performance level.



- Q. The SLOPE i3 program description states that students in classes taught by treatment teachers will be eligible to attend Summer College Awareness and Math Proficiency (C.A.M.P) designed specifically for students who require additional academic support to succeed in Algebra 1. Does that mean ALL students in the treatment group will be required to attend the summer school? Or is it just for the students who require additional help?
- A. Summer C.A.M.P. is limited to the students who meet the identification criteria, which is based on their CST score of basic and below, their 1st semester grade, and a teacher recommendation that the student needs the summer program. Summer C.A.M.P. is a supplemental program and as such requires parent consent; we cannot make students attend. We will invite, promote and encourage students to attend, but no student can be required to attend — not even students who really need the extra help.
- Q. Do the summer academy students have to be assigned to classes taught by Treatment teachers? How will this work with randomization?
- A. Districts are asked to assign classrooms based on their existing process prior to the summer academy. Once randomization occurs and treatment teachers are determined, then eligible students who were assigned to the treatment teacher by the school/district will be invited to summer C.A.M.P. Because the summer program is optional (i.e., students are not required to attend), exceptional recruitment efforts will need to be made to ensure as many eligible treatment students as possible attend summer academy. Control students are not eligible for the summer C.A.M.P.
- Q. C.A.M.P. is intended to be only for students who are struggling the most. What are options for a site that does not have enough struggling students to form a C.A.M.P.?
- If any eligible students are in schools without sufficient numbers for a C.A.M.P., those students could access C.A.M.P at other schools sites. Teachers from schools without a sufficient number of eligible students could teach C.A.M.P. at other schools if they are willing. In short, we will try to make sure all C.A.M.P. eligible students have access to a program, but we recognize that there will be some treatment teachers who do not teach C.A.M.P.
- Q. Is funding for student transportation provided through this project?
- A. Unfortunately, no. Transportation costs are not covered in the i3 project budget.
- Q. Is the SLOPE i3 project aligned to California State Standards? If it is, does it address all the standards or some of the standards? If it addresses only some standards, may we please have a list of these standards?
- A. The SLOPE i3 project is aligned to both California Standards Tests and the Common Core State Standards, which has been verified by the California Department of Education. We are preparing a document that spells out this alignment, and will make this available soon. Meanwhile, you are encouraged to keep in mind that the three SLOPE i3 project Algebra 1 units, are drop in units and not a year-long program. Participating districts will continue to use their own district-adopted curriculum throughout the year.



Q. Our district is going to be engaging and preparing teachers for the Common Core State Standards this year. Will the SLOPE i3 project professional development be based upon teaching practices and teacher modeling contained in the Common Core?

A. Yes. We have made sure that the Common Core State Standards align in terms of curriculum and that modeling behaviors are a part of the professional development delivery to assist and support the professional development efforts occurring for Common Core during the same time frame as our project.

Q. Does the curriculum have design elements that teach the teacher to build collaborative teams so the students can be successful or is it left up to the individual teacher?

A. Curriculum on building a collaborative team is included in the SLOPE i3 project professional development for teachers.

Q. Do you expect the participating districts to provide demographic information for the College Awareness Curriculum?

A. No, districts do not have to provide this information. SLOPE i3 project partner R.T. Fisher and Associates is conducting an environmental scan for each district for purposes of developing the College Awareness Curriculum (CAC). The information included in the environmental scan will be a combination of data pulled from state websites, public district sources, and information from district coordinators.

Q. For the synchronous coaching, what technology will be required?

A. The SLOPE i3 project will provide an iPad2 to all treatment teachers and coaches for real-time face-to-face coaching to occur on non-contract time. Participating teachers will get to keep their assigned iPad2 and will not have to use it exclusively, or at all, on school sites. Participating teachers assigned to the control group will also receive an iPad2 at the end of the randomized control trial period of the SLOPE i3 project.

Q. Can district coaches be incorporated and trained in the coaching model being used in i3?

A. No. District coaches cannot participate during the randomized control period of the SLOPE i3 project.

Q. Will there be a component of staff development for the college awareness curriculum?

A. Yes, there will be staff development component for this element and there will be opportunity to include additional staff.

Q. How should we address requests from parents to switch student class assignments?

A. To the extent possible, districts are asked not to move students between control and treatment classes once the randomized control trial has begun. Parent requests to move student to a different class may cause important



student data to be excluded from the SLOPE i3 study. We anticipate that parent requests will be a much larger problem in year two and we would like to hear from districts ways in which we can avoid or minimize that from occurring.

Q. Can you clarify the use or restriction on using diagnostic assessments?

A. Diagnostic assessments should not be used during the time a teacher is delivering SLOPE i3 project treatment curriculum in his/her Algebra 1 classes. If a school is already using diagnostic assessments in those classes, the SLOPE i3 project director will work with you to set limits around the treatment teacher's use of the assessment so that it does not interfere with the Randomized Control Trial.

Q. Are treatment teachers restricted from participating in school or district professional development?

A. If the initiative is focused on improving the achievement of students in grade 8 who are enrolled in Algebra 1 OR if the initiative is focused on improving the instructional practices or math background knowledge of grade 8 Algebra 1 teachers, we will request that no Treatment teacher (and hence students in classrooms assigned to that teacher) participate in that initiative during the two years in which we are collecting data from those students or teachers. In addition, during this time, all Treatment teachers should not participate in any other formal research study of any type. We would be happy to discuss other ongoing initiatives in participating districts. Other initiatives could be considered acceptable but information about those initiatives would be documented and will become part of the data set collected for our implementation study.

Q. Does this MOU override union contracts?

A. No, this MOU does not take precedent over bargaining agreements.