LEARNING COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT  
Fall 2008  
CRJ 101, CRJ 103, TRS 105 and COS 101

HISTORY: 
This Learning Community started in the Fall of 2003. In 2006, there was a 70+ page assessment of this Learning Community written by Beth Scott, a graduate student at the University of Rochester’s School of Education. There has been an assessment written every year that the Learning Community has existed.

The fall of 2008 saw the largest cohort of students (46) in this Learning Community. Placement is based somewhat on scores on the AccuPlacer in the language portion of the test. Reading is tested by AccuPlacer, but presently MCC does not mandate reading instruction based on those scores. Forty (40) out of 46 students (or 86.9% ) demonstrated a need for assistance in reading based on AccuPlacer scores. This is the largest percentage we have ever had show a need for reading instruction in the Learning Community.

TWO OBSERVATIONS:
Two observations were made about this particular cohort of students.

1. 86.9% (40 of 46 students) were designated as in need of assistance in Reading based on AccuPlacer scores. As mentioned previously, reading instruction is recommended (but not mandated) at MCC. Nineteen (of the 40) students did enroll in REA 098 (Reading). Twenty one (21) did not enroll in a reading course. We wanted to learn if this affected their performance.

2. 28.2% of this group (46 students) had their initial placement based on AccuPlacer revised, and they were placed into a higher level language course. Did this affect their performance?

RETENTION RATE:
The retention rate for this Learning Community cohort was 93.5% or 43 out of 46 students remained in the courses throughout the semester.

SUCCESS RATE
For this study, a “success rate” means that a student achieved a grade in the “C” range or higher. This was chosen because the “C” range represents a GPA of 2.0 which is necessary for graduation. Since many students transfer to another college after MCC, we considered what level of academic achievement is necessary for credits to transfer. A grade of “C” is usually needed to transfer credits to most other colleges. Since criminal justice is the students’ concentration, they should strive for at least a grade in the “C” or higher in their core courses.

READING INSTRUCTION
We tracked the cohort that demonstrated a need for reading instruction. Part of the group (19 students) did enroll in a reading course while the other cohort (21 students) did not enroll in a reading course. Was there a difference in their performance in their other subjects (CRJ 101, CRJ 103 and TRS 105) between these two groups?

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN READING:
There were nineteen (19) students in Reading.

SUCCESS RATE OF 71.4%
71.4% of the students who completed a reading course also received a least a grade of “C” or better in their other academic subjects (CRJ 101, CRJ 103 and TRS 105). The other 28.6% who withdrew from the reading course had either a “W” or “F” in all the other three courses (CRJ 101, CRJ 103 and TRS 105).
SUCCESS RATE OF 0%

Four students withdrew from reading but remained in the other three courses. All of this cohort received a grade of “F” in all three other subjects (CRJ 101, CRJ 103 and TRS 105).

One student withdrew from reading and eventually withdrew from all courses. None of these students received a grade other than a “W” or “F” in their other subjects (REA 098, CRJ 101, CRJ 103, and TRS 105).

STUDENTS NOT ENROLLED IN READING:

There were twenty one (21) students in this cohort. What were their grades in CRJ 101, CRJ 103 and TRS 105? The results were as follows:

Their success rates were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRS 105</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRJ 101</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRJ 103</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the statistical differences here are due to the content and methodology of these courses. Both CRJ 101 and TRS 105 are writing intensive courses. About 47% of the final grade in CRJ 101 is based on writing whereas 100% of the final grade in TRS 105 is based on writing. All of the writing is based on required reading. The subject matter written about is NOT covered in class until AFTER the writing assignments are submitted. Hence the student MUST read in order to write about the topics. Hence the assistance given in a reading course will have a direct effect on the students’ writing and their final grade.

CONCLUSION:

There was a statistically significant difference between these two cohorts. The cohort in a reading course was able to achieve a higher and more consistent academic performance in their other academic subjects than the group that did not have formal reading instruction.

In order to do the writing in CRJ 101 (WR), a student must have solid reading skills. All papers are based on college level texts. One assignment is based on the novel No Heroes, No Villains. Two of the writing assignments are based on the two texts (Criminal Justice Today and Courts of New York). Here the students must identify key concepts in the texts and correlate them with current articles in the newspaper. Another paper is on career research which is based on reading materials from various sources. To write effectively, a student must read effectively. One factor that was common to all of these students (who had AccuPlacer scores) was the need to further their reading skills.

REVISED PLACEMENTS

28.2% of the Learning Community cohort had revised placements. Their original AccuPlacer placement was Ref Admin (Refer to Admissions) or TRS 101 or TRS 103. Did this have an impact on their performance in their English class (TRS 105) or in CRJ 101 and CRJ 103?

Thirteen students or 28.2% of the Learning Community cohort had revised placement. What was their success rate - meaning that they could achieve a grade of “C” or higher in the subjects of CRJ 101, CRJ 103 and TRS 105?

The success rate for this group was 38.5% in TRS 105, CRJ 101 and CRJ 103. This means that 61.5% were not able to achieve a grade of “C” or better in those three subjects.
It should be noted that all students in these cohorts were researched individually, and all students were included in these statistics. This is not a sampling of students or a cross section. The information came from the MCC mainframe records in Banner.

Special recognition should be given to the professors teaching in the Learning Community (Professors Pogue, Kennedy and Nolan). A special thanks to Gary Thompson, chair of Law and Criminal Justice.

There is one student who has an incomplete (I) in all three subjects (CRJ 101, CRJ 103 and TRS 105) for medical reasons. The contracts for the incomplete are on file.

The Learning Community has its own web page. It can be found by following this path: MCC HomePage - A to Z index - L- Learning Community.
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