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Retention Academy

Scholar Research Projects 2017 - 2019

Moraine Valley Community College



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Moraine Valley Retention Academy Executive Summary

Project Background

In 2017, with the generous funds of the Moraine Valley Foundation Board, the hard work and dedication of the college's Completion Commitment Committee, and support of the Executive Leadership Team, the college's inaugural Retention Academy was launched. The Retention Academy featured an opportunity for college faculty and staff to engage in action research to enhance the retention, success, and completion of students. The Academy was centered on the following principles:

- Discover: Learn more about retention and barriers to retention that students face
- Inquire: Explore a research-based project that is relevant and specific to participants' interests
- *Inspire*: Share findings and best practices with colleagues

Interested faculty and staff members submitted an application with their intent and particular research topic they wished to explore within the Academy. Successful applicants were given the go-ahead and support from the committee to research data, past practices and innovative ways to bring those ideas to fruition. The year-long Academy required participation in a two-day off-campus retreat, Friday monthly meetings, and completion of a research project specific to the participants' interests. Participants were each assigned mentors who were members of the Completion Commitment Committee; mentors offered support in conducting research and providing project-specific resources and assistance.

Findings

A total of eight projects (three group and five individual) were completed to fruition. One scholar had to drop out of the program early in the first semester due to personal reasons, and two scholars left the college. Below are some key findings from each of the projects.

Assessing the Deregistration Process on Student Acquisition and Retention

Current college policy de-registers students from their courses if payment is not made by midnight of the same day. This project examined the data for students being deregistered from their courses to assess the impact on future enrollments. Based on the sample size of over 46,000 students, findings showed the deregistration process to have little impact on whether students eventually enroll in classes. However, it is unclear whether students were able to enroll in the exact courses for which they were initially enrolled. Future directions for this project would examine this further, as well as examining whether this policy had a greater impact on particular demographic groups more than others.

Early Alert Interventions: Retention Alert at Moraine Valley

Early alert systems are used to intervene with students at risk of failing early in the semester. This research reviews the Early Alert system that has existed at the college since 2011, examines best practices and implements an improvement plan to enhance the system and improve the likelihood that a student referred for early alert will pass a class and remain in good standing at the end of the semester. Interventions included gaining instructor and student buy-in and a more comprehensive assessment of students' risk factors. Results from the intervention were promising, showing a 32% decrease in students going on academic restriction from spring 2017.

Examining the Impact of Scheduling on Student Retention and Degree Completion

Findings from this project indicated that students' class schedules included more than 250 distinct meeting patterns in fall 2018. Quantitative information was gleaned from Ad Astra software and Colleague about scheduling patterns and qualitative data was gathered from Moraine Valley advisors and counselors. Reasons for the high number of meeting patterns include using nonstandard section start/end times, nonstandard day of the week patterns and offering hybrid classes during traditional peak classroom times. Based on the findings, a Strategic Scheduling Committee was formed to look at practices in place, and during the next academic year, consider implementing scheduling policies/practices that will be adopted by all departments to create a more standardized schedule for students.

Helping Faculty Increase Retention among African-American Male Students

The researcher of this project conducted interviews with African-American male students to gather feedback regarding keys and barriers to success and specifically what more instructors can do to assist them. This feedback was taken to Humanities faculty, and a plan was developed to implement strategies that addressed the comments from the interviews. Some strategies included individualized attention and support for students and review games. After implementation of these strategies in spring 2019, the course section implementing these strategies saw an increase in the number of African-American male students who earned an A, B, or C in the course, compared to before the intervention was implemented.

Impactful Interventions for Students on Academic Probation

This group project took a closer look at developing and measuring the success of a more focused and structured approach for counseling students on Academic Probation. Part of this new approach included helping students develop realistic and attainable educational goals, helping students understand college culture, and reviewing key supportive services with students. Another approach implemented during this process was to use a digital form for all academic restriction interventions, as opposed to a paper form, thereby ensuring counselors' consistent access to the same information. Findings from the project show that students who received the new, more structured approach were more likely to re-enroll at the college compared to those who did not receive this approach.

Improving Online In-Course Success Rates

This group project focused on improving success rates in online courses; college enrollment in online courses have been trending upwards for several years, but success rates have not been as high. A "Getting Started" module was added to Canvas to help students better prepare for online classes, leading to an increase in retention and better grades in those classes. Eleven courses participated in the study, showing the aggregate in-course success rate for grades and retention rates improved 6.21% and 4.45% respectively after the implementation of the module. The module taught students how to use Canvas, the college's learning management system, offered advice about time management and provided tips for dealing with lack of preparedness.

Increasing Student Retention in General Education Math by Eliminating Online Withdrawal

This group project focused on increasing retention in General Education Math (Math 120) by only allowing students to withdraw from the course after they have spoken to an instructor or Student Success Specialist and obtaining their signature. This is contrary to the college policy of allowing students to self-service withdraw from any of their courses. By intentionally introducing this barrier, faculty hoped to dissuade some students who were planning to withdraw without considering all of the consequences, as well as provide additional support and resources to struggling students. Results from this project showed a decrease in the withdrawal rate by 2% after implementing this policy.

Student Success in Medical Terminology Courses

The MRT-110 medical terminology class is a foundation course serving as either a prerequisite or a co-requisite for every Allied Health program at Moraine Valley. This project focused on the issue of the number of students failing the final exam. Approximately 24% of the students failed the final exam during the fall 2016 and spring 2017 semesters. Of those, 46% earned a D or an F in the class. Data suggested the higher the score in Reading 091, the greater likelihood of comprehension and recall of the medical terms and in demonstrating that knowledge on the exam. Next steps for this project include meeting with the college's Curriculum Development & Curriculum Review Committees to review the data and request a new minimum of "B" in RDG-091 & IEL-096 before registering for MRT-110.

Future Opportunities

Evaluation results from the scholars and committee show positive feedback regarding their experiences and benefits gained from their participation in the Retention Academy. The off-campus retreat and organization of the research report showed the highest favorable ratings, while the ratings for the monthly meetings highlighted the greatest opportunity for improvement. However, all aspects of the Academy were rated between "Good" and "Excellent".

Lessons learned are many, and future plans include securing additional feedback from academy scholars, having scholars share their results to a broader college audience, and engaging more faculty and staff in action research, possibly through future iterations of the Retention Academy.



Moraine Valley Retention Academy

Scholars

Dr. Cynthia Anderson Matthew Cullen Laura Earner Dr. Sara Gallagher Shanya Gray Teresa Hannon Frank Johnson Mike Loveday Amy Lubke Dr. Amy Madden Colette Schrank James Snooks



Moraine Valley Retention Academy

2017-2019 Completion Commitment Committee and Mentors

Dr. Kristine Christensen, Co-Chair

Dr. Sadya Khan, Co-Chair

Clare Briner

Dr. Scott Friedman

Dr. Kim Golk

Dr. Pamela Haney

Dr. Lara Hernandez-Corkrey

Dr. JoAnn Jenkins

Dr. Margaret Lehner

Dan Matthews

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Assessing the Deregistration Process on Student Acquisition and Retention

Mike Loveday

The purpose of this brief is to explore the effects of students being deregistered for nonpayment. Specifically, the information here identifies the number of students de-registered for nonpayment during the 2017 calendar year, what the most popular hours for registration and how that could impact the drop rate, the age demographics of those registering online, and how the change of requiring a payment at the time of registration impacted the de-registration process.

Description of Problem

The inspiration for this project was born out of receiving inquiries via social media from students regarding getting dropped from their classes at midnight each night. On more than one occasion a student complained that they were in the middle of registering for their class when midnight rolled around and the system allowed them to continue. These students were confused when checking their email to see both a registered and deregistered email.

The deregistration process is based on a timetable that might not best serve our students. If students start registering online after Moraine Valley is closed, unless they have a credit card, they cannot keep those classes and will be dropped. This could affect students by them not taking the time to register again.

This project looks to discover if there is a problem with the deregistration process that is impacting our students and the college. Does our deregistration process turn away students who are attempting to get into their class?

For our student body, the majority of which may not have credit cards, are they registering for classes in the middle of the night when coming onto campus to pay for their classes is not an option? Are our students running into the same issue on weekends? Are we communicating the deregistration process clearly to our students to reduce the barriers and simplify the process?

Why This Is Important

Moraine Valley altered its online registration process in 2015 to require payment at the time of registration or by midnight of the same day. With our most popular ages using online registration being 20-21, it is conceivable that a certain percentage of them will not have a credit card in their name or would be unable to secure a parent/guardian credit card within the allotted time frame. This has the potential to lead to lost tuition dollars.

Questions Asked to Start

- How many students were not enrolling due to the deregistration process? Was the process frustrating students and causing them to give up and not enroll in classes?
- 2. What time of day are students registering? Are our prospective or current students registering during times that our offices are not open to make payment or call and get help? If students are registering during non-office hours, is dropping them at midnight causing them to just not enroll?
- 3. Does deregistration run on weekends? Similar to Question 2. If our students are attempting to sign up on weekends and do not know they will be dropped at midnight, are we doing them a disservice by taking them out of those classes before they have the opportunity to pay?
- 4. Could we give students 24 hours to pay for classes rather than dropping students at midnight? Is it possible under our current system to give students a running clock that only starts once they register to allow them more time to pay for their classes?

Research Overview

Research started by looking into what the deregistration process is like for other community colleges. Phone calls into several peer institutions went unreturned, but of the two that I spoke with, their process was similar to ours. Software limitations were cited as the reason.

Taking with Moraine Valley's CIO, our deregistration process was limited by our own software. The process by which deregistration is run requires a lot of processing power and the system could be overloaded attempting to give students

Based on our sample size, the deregistration process seems to have little impact on whether the students eventually enroll in classes.

It is unclear whether the students who are deregistered once or twice were aware of the deregistration process and that they would be dropped for non-payment at midnight.

Initial possible solutions that were considered included allowing deregistration to occur twice a day and allow students a better window. If they register at 11 p.m., they could have until noon the next day to come in and make a payment. Another solution was more upfront communication regarding the deregistration process that would allow the student to know the process and decided for themselves the next steps.

Summary of Findings

Based on our sample size of 46,307 students for the Spring and Fall 2017 registration process, the deregistration process seems to have little impact on whether the students eventually enroll in classes. Of those students who were dropped from classes, all were enrolled for the semester they intended.

Currently, we drop students who have not made a payment at midnight every day of the week. This has the potential of affecting 29 percent of our students based on those that use online registration after our offices are closed.

Our largest age group that uses online registration are 20-21 year old – making up 38 percent of our total registrations for Spring 2017.

It is unclear whether the students who are deregistered once or twice were aware of the deregistration process and that they would be dropped for non-payment at midnight.

Our Findings

Based on the random sample size stated above the average number of times a student is dropped from a class is 2.7. Based on our sample, there were 5,602 deregistration instances during the Spring 2017 registration period, affecting 7.35 percent of our total student population. Two-hundred and twenty-six of our students were dropped from a class at least five times, while 578 were dropped from a class at least once.

Every one of those students eventually enrolled at Moraine Valley for the spring semester, but at this time it is unknown if they were enrolled into the classes in which they were dropped.

The most popular hours for online registration occurs between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., affecting 30,963 students in our sample. There are 13,527 students (29 percent) of our students who register after these hours and up to midnight and are potential candidates for being dropped.



What Other Schools Do

The San Bernardino Community College district did a study on two of its community colleges for the Fall of 2015.

About 70 percent of students who were deregistered eventually earned a Grade on Record during the Fall 2015 semester.

60 percent of its students reregistered into the same class in which they were dropped.

SBCCD moved to a one-day deregistration process in 2006 and completely automated the process in 2009.

The automation process is contingent on the one day payment period in that the automation can only run either by second, minute, hour, day, week or month. Running the automation process in an interval other than ones mentioned above opens the possibility of missing students who should otherwise be dropped. Specifically, because of limitations of programming and Colleague, the system has problems and produces inaccurate drops if the timeframe is anything longer than the same day.

The Numbers

Our Data

We sampled 2,000 students from the Spring 2017 semester, 7.35 percent of our total enrollment for Spring.

Of that sample, the average number of times a student was deregistered was 2.7 times.



Times Deregistered

Most students, 568, deregistered once. The next largest sample was the 456 students who deregistered at least four times.

Of the student sample size, we used the students who were deregistered for Spring 2017, all of them were enrolled for the spring semester.

Compared to 2015, before our new deregistration policy went into effect, we saw 5,943 students dropped from their classes during a comparable timeframe. Numbers for how many times each student was dropped was not reported at this time.

Most Popular Registration Hours

Fall 2017

- 39 percent of our students register between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- 28 percent (6,983) of our students register between 5 p.m. and midnight.
- 38 percent register either before or after office hours (either between midnight and 8 a.m. or from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.)

Spring 2017

- 44 percent registered between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- 29 percent (6,544) register from 5 p.m. to midnight
- 41 percent register either before or after office hours (either between midnight and 8 a.m. or from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.)

Overall

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Using the sample size, 29 percent of our students registered after hours, in the evening, in 2017. A total of 13,527 students out of the sample size of 46,307

• Combined Most Popular Registration Hours for Spring and Fall 2017

Conclusion

More data needs to be collected to determine if our deregistration process has any impact on particular demographics or ages. It would also be beneficial to know whether there is any correlation between students who are dropped multiple times and completion rate and/or their eventual grade-on-record. A determination must also be made regarding running the deregistration process on weekends when students' only option is to pay using a credit card.

Unanswered Questions

- How many pay online versus pay in person?
- Of the students who register more than three times, what is their completion rate?
- Is there a correlation between the number of times a student registers and completion?
- Does deregistration skew towards a particular age or race?
- What percentage of our students use a credit card to pay online?

Projected Steps

Based on the data, deregistration does not appear to prevent a majority of students from registering for classes, but communication can still be improved on our end.

Right now, the warning that appears at the bottom of the registration screen is a hodgepodge of information – not all of which applies to that student. There is information regarding non-credit classes and more on that page that would be easy for a student to glance at and pass by without giving it a second thought.

The information that is most relevant to the student needs to be up-front. There needs to be a way for credit-seeking students to see the exact information they need when registering.

I suggest to implement better communication on MVConnect/Student Planner to let students know the process for deregistration. Make it clear, in plain language, that they must make a payment at the time of registration and that if they are unable to make a payment before midnight of the day they register, they will be dropped from any classes.

Some long-term steps to research is whether running the deregistration process twice a day would be beneficial to reduce the number of students who are dropped each day and allow them the opportunity to come on to campus and pay.

Early Alert Interventions: Retention Alert at Moraine Valley

Shanya Gray

Early alert systems are used to intervene with students at risk of failing early in the semester. Moraine Valley Community College has implemented a system since 2011 to intervene with students. This research reviews the system that exists at the college, examines best practices and implements an improvement plan to enhance the system and improve the likelihood that a student referred for early alert will pass a class and remain in good standing at the end of the semester. Interventions employed range from gaining instructor's and student's buy in to assessment of student's risk factors.

Research Overview

Community colleges are critical in higher education as they provide opportunity and access to post-secondary education for a large cross section of society that would otherwise not be afforded such an opportunity. According to Ma & Baum (2016), a community college's open admission policy, coupled with low tuition and geographic proximity to home makes them an important pathway to postsecondary education for many students, especially first generation college students and those who are from low income families, as well as adults returning to school to obtain additional training and credentials. As community colleges provide open access to students for a post-secondary education, it will follow then that often times students who utilize community colleges may in fact be unprepared for a college education often due to systemic educational inequities of a deficient K - 12 public educational system.

Community college students are more likely to be first generation students who may come from impoverished backgrounds which often puts them at a disadvantage for college success. According to Tough (2014), the majority of students who lack preparation for college tend to be either first-generation students, economically disadvantaged or both. According to Tinto (1993), since it has been demonstrated that individuals from disadvantaged and/or minority origins are much more likely to be found in public schools generally and in the lower quality public schools in particular, it follows that they will be less prepared for college. These students then are not prepared for college and are unsure of what to expect or what is even expected of them. The measure of success in high school differs greatly from the standards that are required to be successful in college and this correlates with a student's ability to succeed in college. As a result, they will also be more likely to experience academic difficulty in college regardless of measured ability, and therefore these students are more likely to leave because of academic failure.

Retention literature is indicating that effective interventions at the first indication of academic difficulty can play a role in student attrition (Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon, 2003). Students who do not possess the skills to succeed are often unaware that they lack such skills until they have tried and failed. It is therefore imperative that students who do not have prior knowledge of the functioning of the college system be made aware that prior behaviors and techniques that they had learned were successful in academic environments are insufficient for success at a college level. Due to these factors, educational institutions are recognizing that the practices and systems that intervene to retain students and empower their success are just as critical as recruitment practices. According to Varney (2012), supporting students and intervening quickly and proactively before issues become insurmountable are keys to student success.

Institutions are therefore investing in and have been exponentially increasing their use of early alert systems over the years. According to (Kollinger, 2017), early alert systems have a proven positive impact on graduation rates. Habley, Bloom & Robbins (2012) note that 74% of public, 78% of private and 68% of two-year institutions report having early warning systems. Prior to the implementation of early alert systems, students, instructors and institutions alike were not aware a student was failing until midway through or after the semester has been completed. Ultimately, a student will be more likely to graduate if they avoid any impending `failure that can disrupt their educational path, not being aware of failure until this late stage can have negative implications for students especially those who cannot afford to pay out of pocket and are funding their education through Financial Aid. For a student who is on financial aid, it is unlikely that after two semesters of academic failure, they will be able to obtain their financial aid benefits because of Federal standards of academic progress policies set by the Federal Government. For many community college students, this is devastating because they cannot afford college on their own.

As the research on early alert systems is still growing, institutions are wrestling with what are the most effective ways to implement such systems and how to overcome the barriers that may arise in successfully intervening to help students with using such systems. According to the research literature, there are differing trends in the implementation of systems amongst higher education institutions. Some institutions target certain identified at-risk student groups, such as students on academic probation. Many others use the early alert system for all students while others use them primarily for gateway courses.

Beyond who utilizes the system, there are recommended best practices for systems usage. One to the need for an assessment built within the system that can One of the other concerns that early alert systems attempt to address are the fact that although instructors may give grades to students, the grade that is given to a student in and of itself does not address the underlying cause or source of the student's failing performance. It is therefore imperative that early alert systems find additional more comprehensive ways of assessing and addressing the root causes if a student if failing. In such contexts, some colleges have issued early alert forms that require additional information from the instructor (Cuseo, 2006) while others ask students to complete an assessment. A list of indicators (Tampke, 2009) that included poor class attendance, poor class performance on quizzes/exams, does not participate in class, difficulty completing assignments, financial problems, physical health concerns, mental health concerns, alcohol or substance use concerns, difficulty with reading and difficulty with Maths

Critical to implementing a successful system is gaining buy in and compliance from faculty. In most instances utilizing retention alert systems become an additional task for many faculty. Therefore, any system that is implemented should take convenience of usage into consideration and should make creating an alert about a student easy and seamless. In addition, administrators who are seeking to implement the system will need to get faculty buy in to implement such a system and according to (Cuseo, 2006), administrators who recognize and reward faculty for utilization can then expect higher rates of utilization. If faculty are supportive seeing the value and the ease of utilizing a system then they are more likely to refer students.

Student compliance is another critical component to the success of early alert systems. According to (Harrison et al,2010), students who lack study skills do not recognize a problem until they fail an exam or other assignment which is often impossible to recover from in order to salvage a passing grade in the class. Students therefore need to be made aware of the importance of such interventions and need to be incentivized either positively or negatively to follow through on utilizing the resources and implementing the assistance recommended to them. If not, students may not see the imperative to follow through on the recommended assistance and thus may choose not to do so.

Baseline Data

Benchmarking

A survey was conducted with other area community colleges to examine their approaches to early alert systems. The community colleges surveyed were as follows: College of Dupage, Joliet Junior College, Harper Community College, South Suburban Community College and Rock Valley Community College. All of the community colleges surveyed currently utilize early alert systems. Several questions were posed to the community colleges that assessed their early alert system including evaluating such items as how instructors learn about the system, when the system is used, who is alerted when the instructors put a notification in the system and reasons students are referred. The questions and the answer are tabulated below:

Questions	COD	າເຕ	Harper	South Suburban	Rock Valley
How are instructors informed or trained	Presentations	Email	Informational session	Presentations during meetings etc.	Emails
	emails		Email		presentations
Timeframe	1 st third of the semester	Have campaigns but anytime	Week 4 & Week 10		Encouraged 3-6 weeks but anytime
Referrals to	Counselors	Counselor/tutoring	Advisor/counselor/specialist	counselors	Counselor notified
Student notified	yes	No	Not always	No	No
Reasons students are referred		Poor attendance	Kudos	Emails, phone calls, in person appointments	grades
		Performance	Never attended		
		Consideration to drop	Minor Concern		
			Major Concern		
			Referrals		
Type of System Used	Internally built	Grade First	Starfish	Data Module	Maxient/Ellucian

History and Current Practices of the Retention Alert System

Information was compiled about the history and current processes for the Retention Alert System at Moraine Valley Community College, as well as analyzing current academic standing trends for students referred through the retention alert program. The Retention Alert system was first instituted at Moraine Valley Community College in 2011. This system was funded through a Next Generation Grant given by the Gates Foundation. After the grant expired, the Information Technology Department created a home-built retention alert system.

Upon implementation of the system at Moraine Valley Community College, the Counseling & Career Development Center partnered with the developmental education department to implement the system in developmental education courses. To implement the retention alert system, the Department Chair for Counseling and Advising trained developmental education faculty in person and through correspondence on how to utilize the system. Faculty were instructed on such items as how to refer students using the system, what concerns they should refer students, as well as were encouraged to include detailed notes about the concerns regarding the student and what interventions if any the instructor had in mind to offer the student. Instructors were encouraged to refer students who presented with the following issues: attendance concerns, late/missing assignments/test/course materials, limited English proficiency, low homework/quiz or test scores, need career exploration or other.

After instructors refer students to the Counseling & Career Development Center, the students referred to a counselor are assigned to a counselor within 48 hours. After this, the counselor then attempts to contact the student within 48 hours through two phone call attempts and two email follow ups if the student isn't reached.



Workflow for Retention Alert follows the following procedure:

The academic standings of students referred through the early alert system were collected and analyzed at the end of the semesters the students were referred. This research was collected for four academic semesters dating from Fall 2015 to Spring 2017. This data showed that there was a high likelihood that a student for early alert interventions will go to academic restriction standing at the end of the semester. Academic restriction standing means that a student's GPA has fallen below 2.0 and that student will be placed either on Academic Caution, Academic Probation, Academic Suspension or Academic Dismissal. During each semester analyzed, between 63% and 81.85% of students who were referred and had a status went on academic restriction with the average GPA being between 1.578 and 1.793.

Status	2015 FA	2016SP	2016 FA	2017SP
Good	15	46	14	16
Caution	32	42	24	25
Con. Caution	1	5	1	4
Probation	3	25	2	38
Suspension	2	5	2	5
Dismissal	1	3		
Restriction	39	80	29	72
No Status	19 (10)	64 (39)	33 (21)	28 (14)
Total	73	190	76	116
% w/status on restriction	72%	63%	67.4%	81.8%
SOAP GPA	1.793	1.693	1.71	1.578

The students' academic standings are tabulated below.

Below is a table illustrating the high percentage of students going to an academic restriction status.



Improvement Plan

An improvement plan is critical to enhancing the early intervention system utilized at Moraine Valley Community College to give students a greater probability of success in their classes. Based on the literature review and the baseline data, there are five recommendations for improvement. As the early alert system and interventions are a collaborative effort, the improvement plan requires implementation of interventions with the different stakeholders who include students, faculty and counseling faculty. The five recommendations include buy in from all of these stakeholders, as well as more comprehensively assessing students for at risk of failing indicators.

The first recommendation for improvement is to work with faculty to gain faculty buy in and compliance. With this effort, it is recommended that counselors and administrators of this initiative reach out to faculty to present at departmental meetings. Presentations at departmental meetings will ensure that faculty are aware of and support the early intervention initiative. Faculty should also be trained on best practices of how and when to refer students and on expectations in the referral process. In addition to the initial presentation, it is recommended that counseling faculty continue to close as much as possible, the feedback loop with faculty and be available for consultation as necessary to continue to encourage the participation of faculty in the intervention.

Beyond faculty buy in, faculty's communication with students is crucial to the success of such interventions. Currently, communication about the early alert referrals and interventions varies according to the instructor. Some instructors include the information in their syllabus and intentionally talk about the early alert interventions other instructors do not mention the intervention at all while others mention it in passing to students. Research shows

that it imperative that faculty communicate intentionally with the student about the referral process and the intervention and positively stress the need to utilize such an intervention to be successful. In order to implement this improvement, instructors will be given key talking points in their meeting and will be sent a email template to utilize when communicating with students.

Another component of the improvement plan is to find a way to implement an assessment of at risk students beyond classroom tests, quizzes and assignments. Often, faculty are unaware of a student's limitations or capabilities apart from the required competencies in that class due to not having a holistic picture of a student's current situation, competencies or deficiencies. Not only this, but assessment of a student's capabilities and the potential to implement subsequent interventions that can empower and enable students to pass their current courses often occur too late in the semester for a student to be successful in the class. It is therefore imperative that any assessment implemented assesses areas that the research has identified as predictive risk factors for students. Assessment for the following should be included in the assessment: motivation, knowledge of college culture and expectations as well as academic expectations, access and utilization to on campus and external resources and career decision making skills as well as whether or not the student is a first generation student.

Subsequently, student buy in goes hand in hand with faculty communication. Students who are unaware of the early alert program or who do not understand the necessity for it will have little interest in pursuing this optional assistance. This in and of itself has been a major obstacle in the success of the program. As counselors have reached out to students, there has been little to no follow up by students. Hence exploring potential ways to enhance student buy in will be explored and implemented if possible.

Counselors will continue to intervene with students by reaching out to the students in a timely fashion when the referrals are received. During this time, the counselors will let the students know that it is very important that they follow up to ensure success. Counselors will call and email the students twice and in speaking with them will assess next steps for the students. Next steps for students can often include visiting the counselor in their office but academic or career counseling or personal interventions. It can include career counseling if a student is unsure of their direction.

Below is a table of the proposed improvement plan:

Area for Growth	Improvement Plan
Faculty buy in	Meet with faculty initially to outline expectations and continue to meet with them on an ongoing basis.
Faculty assessment of concern	Discuss with faculty, recommendations for assessing at risk students beyond subject competencies
Faculty communication with the student	Create templates and improve guidelines for faculty to communicate with the students
Student buy in	Incentivize students to follow up with counselors
	Counselor presents in classes ahead of time
	Faculty connect student with counselor
Counselor interventions	Assessing for career readiness
	Connecting with mentoring/ offices on campus

Methodology - Data Collection, Measurement and Analysis Plan

Students who are registered at Moraine Valley Community College and taking a class classified as a Developmental Education Class will be assessed during their class time quantitatively by the means of a dichotomous questions that uses 24 questions to assess a student's risk levels based on performance in class, motivation and career direction, confidence in abilities, access and knowledge of resources. In this survey, each student will be asked a question and will be asked to answer whether the question is true or false. The survey is formatted so that a true answer increases risk of college success. This data will then be analyzed for the trending at risk areas common among students studied.

A quantitative analysis of the students who were referred for early intervention services took place. This analysis gave the average students' GPA and whether or not that student went to a level of academic restriction. Academic restriction includes whether or not a student was place on academic caution, probation, suspension or dismissal. The standing of the students who were referred for the intervention in this research were the dependent variable and the Their academic standing at the end of the subsequent semester after they are referred will be their dependent variable.

Qualitative data was compiled by having discussions with counseling faculty, other faculty and administrators at the institution. This data was utilized for fact finding and understanding the history and current practices of the system.

Results

To gain faculty buy in, a counselor attended the Developmental Education Department's Meeting scheduled in September of 2018, the semester in which the research is being conducted. During this meeting the counselor gave the faculty a copy of the survey, shared a success stories of how students had benefitted from this intervention, as well as shared expectations and request for assistance with the pilot project. During this time as well, the counselor recommended tips for communicating with the students in both written and oral correspondence about the early alert program.

The results were administered to 75 students in 5 different developmental education classes. From this survey that was administered, there are several questions that emerged as most concerning and most impactful to the students. The question that 44% of the students answered as true is: "Keeping up with my class schedule and assignments are harder than I expected". Following this, the question that garnered 43% of the students answering true is: "I've not turned in an assignment or I have turned in an assignment late". The third question answered as true is "I work more than 20 hours a week". The results of the survey administered are outlined below in the chart and the subsequent table.



Questions Answered in the Survey.

	Question	TRUE	%
1	I am the first one in my family to go to college	24	32
2	I am still undecided about my major and my career	23	31
3	Keeping up with my class schedule and assignments is harder than I expected	33	44
4	I work more than 20 hours a week	30	40
5	I don't know how to get onto canvas	2	2.6
6	I have doubts about my ability to do well in my classes	28	37
7	I am not sure where I would go on campus for tutoring	20	27
8	I do not know where to go for help on campus as the first one in my family to go to college	11	15
9	I often feel out of place or uncomfortable in my class	8	11
10	I don't know exactly how to study and prepare for upcoming tests	21	28
11	There's no one at home I can turn to for help with my homework if needed	25	33
12	I'm afraid/nervous to seek out my teacher when I don't understand something	10	13
13	I have financial difficulties that can sometimes get in the way of classes	19	25
14	I have health issues that can sometimes get in the way of classes	10	13
15	I have family issues that can sometimes get in the way of classes		23
16	I find it difficult to raise my hands and ask questions in class		19
17	I've missed more than one day of classes so far this semester	27	36
18	I've already felt like giving up on college	22	29
19	I've not turned in an assignment or I've turned in an assignment late	32	43
20	I've not purchased my books yet for class	7	9
21	I am in college because I was forced to be by parents or family and I don't really want to be here	9	12
22	I am not certain where to find information about tests or assignments for my classes	5	7
23	I am a parent and that can sometimes get in the way of classes	7	9
24	I am not sure where to go if I need personal, career or academic help	15	20

A presentation was made to counselors about the early alert initiative and research. Counselors then continued to reach out to students as previously planned and employ interventions such as assessing for career readiness and referrals to different on campus resources as necessary. In addition, counselors continued to offer academic, career and personal counseling to students to ensure that they were empowered to be successful. The students were referred from one instructor who participated in the research to one particular counselor. This was the counselor that also presented to the classes of this instructor. Of the students contacted, 50% of them were reached. This appeared anecdotally to be a big increase from previous responses however given there was no baseline of students' responses this was not effectively measured.

The results that measured students' academic standings at the end of 2018FA indicated that of 90 students, 45 students went on restriction with 34 going on caution, 6 going on probation, 2 on suspension and 3 on dismissal.

Status	2018 FA
Good	34
Caution	34
Probation	6
Suspension	2
Dismissal	3
Restriction	45
No Status	6
Total	90
% w/status on restriction	50%
SOAP GPA	1.686

The percentage of students going on restrictions decreased by 31.8% since last documented in 2017 Spring.

Plans for Future Implementation or Scalability, Implications, Recommendations and Next Steps

With the right implementation, follow through and buy in, early alert systems can be successful in intervening with students early in a student's college career. It is imperative that buy in and compliance from all stake holders is obtained and the relevance and importance of following up with the campus resources and interventions are stressed for students. Students in fact need to be made aware of the correlations of their success or failure based on the additional resources they utilize.

Given the favorable results, it is recommended that given multiple factors that the study be duplicated to ensure reliability and validity. As there are so many factors impacting a student's restriction status, it cannot be affirmatively said that the interventions employed cause the decline however it can be said that the interventions significantly impacted the decline and thus this should continue to be studied and employed.

Upon evaluating this research project, it can be noted that there was no efficient way of obtaining baseline data that showed a student's follow up or response to a counselor through the early alert systems. For this particular outreach, counselors document when they reach out to students however, no system has been implemented to pull data easily to show if that student responded and if they followed up with ongoing contact with counselors.

Each student's individual note would have to be combed through to determine whether or not this student made contact.

In the middle of this research project, a confounding variable that impacted the data was the fact that the Standards of Academic Progress (SOAP) policy changed. Students who are flagged under SOAP policies receive a GPA of 2.0 or lower, however with the changes that were implemented, an increase in the number of students who went on restriction occurred as students who withdrew from all classes and students who had taken less than 12 credit hours would now be flagged in the system as well. This was a factor that impacted data collection pre and post intervention.

Moraine Valley Community College is in the process of implementing Starfish, a new early alert system. With the home grown system that Moraine was currently using through Ellucian, there were a lot of technical issues that prevented efficient use of the system. Often times, counseling faculty are unable to see the notes that faculty entered into the system about concerns or needs of the student being referred. In implementing a system that will not have these issues and will have many more capabilities there will be great potential to intervene with students.

In order to effectively intervene with any early alert system however, a college needs to ensure they build out capacity for such an implementation. With counselors who were intervening with such a system at the college, it was acknowledged that at times the 24 to 48 hour turn around timeline was not always possible because of competing demands and prescheduled student appointments. It is therefore recommended that counselors be intentional about not only continuing to schedule early alert time to reach students but that administrators be mindful of the capacity building that needs to take place to effectively implement such a system.,

Given the survey that was conducted, there needs to be a larger scale survey conducted to recognize the deficiencies of a student's general knowledge of college expectations and requirements when first commencing their college career. Given that at least 1/3 of these students are first generation students who do not have additional support or resources at home to assist with college then it is clear that there needs to be more intentionality about intervening with these students through resources, procedures and policies to ensure success.

Another implication or consideration will be the need to build capacity to provide the necessary intensive interventions that are needed with the students.

It is critical to continue to gain faculty buy in. Beyond getting faculty buy in and compliance, faculty who are referring students through the early alert system should be trained about the processes and best practices to do so as well as the recommended expectations for referrals. In this way, effective and efficient usage of the system will be more likely.

Policies and practices need to be implemented to encourage participation from students. If students are incentivized to participate in the early alert system then there will be a greater response. Given that responses are corollary to utilization of resources and greater success then it will follow that incentivizing students may in fact enhance a student's chances at success. Response from students proved to be one of the greatest obstacles in employing successful interventions. Counselors indicated that more than 50% of the students they reached out to never responded to their initiation of contact yet there are stories that when students do respond they are successful interventions employed.

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Examining the Impact of Scheduling on Student Retention and Degree Completion

Laura Earner

The purpose of this research is to determine if current scheduling practices used at Moraine Valley Community College impact student retention. In order to make this determination quantitative information was gathered from Ad Astra software and Colleague about scheduling patterns and qualitative data was gathered from MVCC advisors and counselors. Findings indicate that the MVCC class schedule included over 250 distinct meeting patterns in the fall of 2018. Reasons for the high number of meeting patterns include using nonstandard section start/end times, nonstandard day of the week patterns and the practice of offering of hybrid classes during traditional peak classroom time. The lack of consistency in scheduling suggests that it might be hard for students to develop a schedule that works for them with "no holes". Students find themselves in situations where one class overlaps into two separate course periods. While sections within a department appeared to be balanced there does not appear to be interdepartmental coordination in the way classes are scheduled.

Information gathered from current advisors and counselors also indicates that current scheduling practices can be problematic for students. The advisors/counselors noted that interdepartmental required course conflicts occur each semester for the same courses and this interferes with a student's ability to complete degree requirements. For example, students in the one program found that courses from different departments met on the same day/same time each semester. This group also mentioned that certain majors appear to be only offered on certain days. Students that cannot attend on those days cannot complete that major. There is one major that appear to only be only offered T/R from 10-2. If a student cannot attend at that time they will not be able to complete that major. Observations on the "non-standardization" of start and end times and standard meeting patterns were also discussed supporting documentation retrieved form Colleague and Ad Astra. Some programs have adopted different meeting patterns and courses offered in one department appears to use their own unique beginning and end time schedule.

Advisors/counselors also mentioned that some student populations have a harder time than others in completing degree requirements. This may result from the chosen major, course methodology or time of day classes are offered. For example, some programs only offer a limited amount of evening classes. Some classes are only offered online. There is one foundation class that in recent semesters was only offered during the day. If a student places in this class and cannot attend during they cannot enroll at Moraine. One new class offering for fall 2018 may cause scheduling problems when it is introduced because it is a five hour class that meets four days a week. The advisors/counselors also said that they felt that the students would benefit from having additional courses set up like the COM bridge classes.

Current practices related to scheduling hybrid courses present challenges for students. If a class meets one day a week in prime time the student may not be able to find another class to balance the schedule. In the fall of 2017 of the 340 hybrid courses offered 140 of the sections were scheduled in "prime time" Monday-Friday from 9-noon. This is a time period where may "traditional" students attend class and hybrid may not be a good fit for this population.

Based on their experience the advisors/counselors felt that students would benefit by having access to a projected two year course offering plan for their major. The plan would indicate what semester a course is offered and if it would be available day, evening or online. This would help the students plan for degree. The advisors/counselors also said that students would benefit from more early morning classes (even before 8:00 a.m.), more evening classes and more standardized length of terms within a semester. Many schools only offer two or three patterns within a semester and it was suggested that an evening fast track model be reintroduced to MVCC

Another source of information that was analyzed for this project was a recent article published in the Educational Advisory Board (EAB) Community College Forum that analyzed current scheduling practices in place at two year institutions. Through their research EAB formulated a recommendation that two year schools should form a strategic scheduling committee that would be responsible for the development and implementation of course offerings. EAB suggests that since schedule development is an ongoing process, all institutions would benefit by having a committee/office that organizes and oversee scheduling logistics. This does not currently exist at MVCC. In terms of the master credit schedule, the scheduling office coordinates the process, assists with space utilization and enters schedule information provided by programs and departments. The scheduling office does not set meeting patterns, times, etc.

Some policies that EAB recommends include requiring departments to offer a specific number/percentage of class sections in prime time, afternoon and on Fridays and evenings to serve student needs. EAB further recommends that in order to make sure that departments follow these policies consequences accompany noncompliance. They suggest consequences like losing funding or other budgetary constraints. EAB believes that policies with consequences will help institutions promote a cultural shift within departments that focuses on students' needs. EAB believes that scheduling practices that are not tied to specific expectations often leads to course scheduling that evolves from faculty preference, traditional hours and union contracts.

EAB recognizes that it is important to include faculty in schedule development since they are responsible for course content and the sequencing that needs to occur for degree completion. EAB believes that adding faculty knowledge to a strategic scheduling committee allows input for institutional research on enrollment projections. Ideally, institution would develop

schedules further than one semester in advance to make the student course planning process easier. The organization believes that the effectiveness of scheduling practices can best be evaluated through both solicited and behavioral feedback from faculty and student.

Once a committee and process are in place a school can then conduct student surveys that may point out barriers students face when trying to enroll for classes. Institutional research offices are also able to track student enrollment behavior overtime and course dropout rates to apply to future course schedules. This will allow administrators to employ technological tools that support data analysis to verify faculty observations and faculty recommendations on course schedules. Models may be developed and run to estimate future enrollments based on students history allowing institutions to make more accurate predictions further into the future, which allows for the design of course schedules earlier leading to a smoother planning process

Research conducted by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) also provided advice for student centered scheduling practices. According to AACRAO when implementing a strategic scheduling process it is important to create scheduling guidelines that monitors changing pattern requirements and incorporate scheduling options that lead to a more even distribution of courses over the entire range of meeting times. AACRAO believes that to get this to happen requires some centralization of the scheduling process and a greater use of available technology to increase efficiency and improve response time to address and correct scheduling anomalies AACRAO believes that departments should not schedule more than 60% of their undergraduate course sections during the peak times of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday during the two main academic terms. Setting a limit should will result in more scheduling flexibility and reduce the possibility that students will encounter scheduling conflicts.

AACRAO goes on to recommend that that required undergraduate courses be scheduled over the entire range of day and time meeting combinations, including the early morning and late afternoon time slots. To get departments and programs to cooperate with these guidelines scheduling priority will be given to those academic departments that are in compliance with established "Academic Course Scheduling Guidelines" and who submit their course information by the designated deadlines

According AACRAO, the practice of course rolling should be discouraged. MVCC, like many other schools, follows a practice of rolling the previous year's course information to a subsequent year is to build the new schedule. The scheduling office provides departments with last year's schedules. The problem with this practice that it can perpetuate inefficiency because of the tendency for departments to keep features like meeting days and times, as well as classroom locations, the same. It is recommended that the course roll should be a shell comprised of only the relevant course information, with no meeting and location information

provided. Historical enrollment data is available to assist departments in making informed course offering and scheduling practices.

During a scheduling presentation conducted by representatives from Ad Astra the importance of standardized scheduling was highlighted for both efficient room usage and student scheduling. The image below highlights problems identified with the current schedules at MVCC.

The Importance of On-Grid Scheduling



Allowing classes to begin and end at a nonstandard time results in problem type 1, the overlap. A student enrolled in one of these sections will find they have a gap in their schedule because other classes needed started before this class ended. Problem 2 the partial block occurs when some sections adhere to standard start and end times and other sections do not. The student can find some back to back classes but may experience problems with sections that fall outside the standard times. Problem 3, the partial week occurs when departments develop a pattern of not offering classes on certain days of the week of select nonstandard day of the week meeting patterns. This may limit a student's ability to take a fool load of classes. c a section covers multiple start/end times. Class rooms also are not effectively utilized except in the primetime grid pattern.

Research gathered for this project was shared with member of the executive leadership team at MVCC. Based on the findings the Vice President of Academic Affairs created a strategic scheduling committee to look at current practices in place. The committee began meeting this past academic year and focused on sections designated as late starts and sections that have nonstandard meeting times with the goal of eliminating the variation of late start dates and adjusting nonstandard times to begin on the hour or half hour. Discussions are still ongoing but faculty have indicated a willingness to adjust times. Late start classes actually raised an issue of credit hours and time in seat that is also being addressed. Conversations that have resulted from the committee meetings and faculty/chair conversations indicate a willingness to begin adjusting patterns during upcoming semesters. During the next academic year, the scheduling committee will consider implementing scheduling policies/practices that will be adopted by all departments in an effort to create a more standardized schedule for students.

Efforts are also underway to hire an outside representative to conduct a comprehensive strategic scheduling checkup workshop and training session on campus. Funding is currently under discussion and the goal will be to offer the workshop during the fall 2019 semester. The workshop will address issues with meeting patterns and number of section offerings. Reports gathered from Ad Astra suggest that MVCC offers too many sections of certain courses. Enrollment is spread out over a wide variety of sections resulting in low seat fill for some classes. Tied to an analysis of the number of offerings will be research about implementing use of the Colleague wait list function. Many schools use the wait list to determine if more sections of certain classes need to be added over time.

Current scheduling practices are also being discussed. Consideration should be given to a more centralized scheduling process. This type of process may evolve from adopting a standardized time grid for section starts and standardized number of weeks meeting patterns. Also, as stated previously, the number of sections offered each semester should be decreased until more offerings are at or about at capacity to better utilize both classroom and faculty resources.

Finally, the only true way to gauge if retention is positively affected by changes current scheduling practices is to seek input form the students. The scheduling office gathered data from student exit surveys and from a survey conducted by scheduling in 2016 to see if any mention was made about scheduling practices. While some information can be gathered it would be better to get this data during the registration process. A request has been initiated to explore the implementation of a short, pop-up survey that would occur after a student finished registration to gauge their satisfaction with the process. This would be the best way to gather that information, but it is not likely to occur in the near future as it may require customization of current software used during registration.

Helping Faculty Increase Retention among African-American Male Students

Amy Lubke

The barriers that impact the success of students and retention within a community college are overwhelming high. According to the EAB (2017), traditional barriers include onboarding, skipping enrollment steps, indecision choosing a major, delayed introductory sequence, and being locked out of critical courses. Although these are all important barriers to be aware of and to try to take steps to intervene and improve, most of these issues are impacting students before they ever arrive in a classroom. It is only after a student has overcome many of these barriers that they have the opportunity to truly begin their education. Once a student is able to overcome these barriers, it is crucial as an instructor to foster an environment in which students are able to be successful within the classroom. This can be achieved by acknowledging, respecting, and understanding diversity among students. An instructor's aim should be to inspire and support all students. In order to do so, it is important to be aware of the students who are struggling, understand the factors that are contributing to this, and establish an approach to aid students in being more successful. African American Male college students have the lowest completion rates in comparison to all racial/ethnic groups throughout higher education in the U.S. and is reflected in Moraine Valley Community College completion rates as well (Harper, 2006a; Strayhorn, 2010).

Nationally, in 2002, only 4.3% of students enrolled in higher education institutions were African American males, the exact same percentage as in 1976 (Harper, 2006a; Strayhorn, 2010). At MVCC, the percentage of African American Male students is even lower. During the Fall Semester of 2012, 3.85% of students enrolled were African American males; 2013 – 4.2%, 2014 – 3.4%, and 2015 – 3.6%. Among these students enrolled at MVCC, the percentage of degrees attained, or certificates earned is significantly lower than that of the rest of the population.

Geneva Gay (2000) states, "Too many students of color have not been achieving in schools as well as they should (or can) for far too long. The consequences of these disproportionally high levels of low achievement are long-term and wide reaching, personal and civic, individual and collective" (pg 1).

This study will explore the research question, what classroom strategies can faculty implement to improve the success and retention of African American Male students using a mixed method study. Data will be gathered from sections of the traditional lecture course Western Humanities I: Foundations (HUM101). This course was chosen for this study as it is a college level course and that meets IAI transfer requirements. By the end of this study, the hope is to
determine best practices that faculty can employ to increase the success and retention rates for African American Male students.

Research Overview:

Culturally Responsive Teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Some of the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching are:

- 1. Positive perspectives on parents and families
- 2. Communication of high expectations
- 3. Learning within the context of culture
- 4. Student-centered instruction
- 5. Culturally mediated instruction
- 6. Reshaping the curriculum
- 7. Teacher as facilitator

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). The Dreamkeepers. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing Co.

Review of Literature:

Wood, L. (2011). Falling Through the Cracks: An early warning system can help keep Black males on the community college campus. *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*.

Within this article, Wood states that the number of African American male students in community college is at the lowest in comparison to both African American females and majority counterparts. Within the first year alone, more than a quarter of African American and students will drop out, and after 3 years, 55% will drop out without ever attaining a degree or certificate. This puts African American male students at the community college level at the highest dropout rate among every racial, ethnic, and gender sub-group. One factor that is suggested in this article that may impact the success of African American male students is psychological in nature. These students may be receiving negative messages and have stressors both in and out of school. These negative messages may be reinforced by staff, faculty, and peers. These negative stereotypes and environment could potentially hinder students' willingness to contribute and oftentimes lead them to believe that they can not achieve academically.

Holmes, Ryan C. (2018) Black Student Success on Your Campus: Increase Recruitment, Retention, Engagement, & Completion. Webinar.

Through this Webinar, Dr. Holmes identifies key practices to consider, some of which include:

- Do not simply rely on the resilience of underrepresented students
- Attempt to be ahead of the students; get out of "benign neglect"
- Be visible and accessible; retention is about relationships
- Faculty, staff, and administrators should address and improve their own social justice consciousness (Holmes, Edwards, and DeBowes, 2009)

Smith, Kentina (2018). Creating Socially, Emotionally, and Culturally Responsive Environments to Improve Conditions for Learning. *Innovation Abstracts, XL*(No.7).

Concepts including what is cultural responsiveness, and how can faculty implement techniques in the classroom to encourage this, are addressed in this article. Smith states that the aim of culturally responsive teaching incorporates acknowledging, respecting, and understanding diversity within the classroom and using this to try and lessen achievement gaps. Instructors should use information including students' experiences and backgrounds, and incorporate that into lessons and interactions, making a more relatable experience for students. A student is more likely to be engaged and appreciate a course when they are making connections between the content and their lives, communities, and careers. The formula that Smith came up with to implement these concepts is called D.E.E.P. Communications Strategies, which includes Developing appropriate language, Encouraging open and honest dialogue, Empowering students to share without ridicule, and Processing information shared by reconnecting it to course content.

Strayhorn, T. L. (2018). Fostering Belonging in Community College Classrooms. *Innovation Abstracts, XL*(No. 16).

Belonging in the academic environment is defined as "the extent to which an individual feels like a valued, accepted, and legitimate member in their academic domain" (Lewis, Stout, Pollock, Finkelstein, Ito, 2016). In addition to student abilities, aptitudes, attitudes, aspirations, and study time, this article addresses the importance of academic belonging to the success of students. Strayhorn states that "academic success is clearly a social process influenced powerfully by the extent to which students feel cared about and connected to others in the learning environment." The three strategies that Strayhorn encourages to increase a sense of belonging include:

- 1. Normalize the experience of feeling a lack of belonging (or alienation) and help students understand that these concerns are temporary and dissipate over time
- 2. Practice vulnerability in the classroom and share aspects of yourself with students
- 3. Structure classroom practices in ways that maximize students' opportunities to cooperate, collaborate, and create positive social connections.

Student Interviews:

In order to understand factors that contribute or deter from student success, several interviews were conducted with students at MVCC throughout the Spring 2018 semester. These interviews were separated into two groups; the focus group consisting of African American male students and a control group of all other students. Below is a list of the questions and responses included in those interviews.

1. What classes have you taken that you felt the most successful in?

Control Group: Answers varied but included courses such as Anatomy, Biology, Ethics, Art Appreciation, Composition, and Philosophy to name a few.

Focus Group: Similar response in that answers varied with courses including Sociology, Composition, Music, Psychology, Speech, and Biology.

2. Why did you feel successful? What aided in your success?

Control Group: Some responses included that the student had a passion and interest in the subject, that the instructors were knowledgeable, the material came easy to them, the classes were relevant to their career path, and that the classes were engaging.

Focus Group: Responses included that the one on one time with instructors they received in the class was important, that instructors were open to questions and always available and eager to assist students, instructors were available during office hours, instructors pulled students aside for additional help, instructors made a connection with the students, and that instructors were caring about each individual student.

3. What experiences in these classes do you remember the most?

Control Group: Field trips, good discussions, presentations, when instructors would go "off script" and let topics flow.

Focus Group: Students recalled specific assignments in which they were able to take the course material and relate it to their lives outside of the classroom.

4. What classes did you feel the least successful?

Control Group: Speech, Science, IT, Mathematics, Sociology, Economics, Online courses, Psychology.

Focus Group: College 101, Reading, Mathematics, Economics, and Biology.

5. Why?

Control Group: Students said that they didn't apply themselves, they were nervous, they were taking classes that the student didn't find interesting, students admitted to procrastinating and said that they weren't motivated.

Focus Group: Students responded that they didn't make a connection, material was everywhere, the subject was hard, weren't actually learning anything but rather they were just trying to get a passing grade.

6. Could the instructor have done anything differently to help you in areas that you were struggling in?

Control Group: No, probably not, the instructor could have smiled more, had more hands-on activities, slowed down.

Focus Group: Communicate more, be available outside of the classroom, reach out, make a connection, help students to feel comfortable, more one on one days.

7. Have you taken a HUM course?

Control Group: 73% - Yes, 27% - No

Focus: Group: 50% - Yes, 50% - No

The common theme that kept presenting itself among the focus group that was not apparent among the control group was that the African American male students felt that they would benefit from more individual interaction with their instructors. This recurring theme was apparent in almost all interviews within the focus group but not among the control group. When asking the students of the focus group why "one on one" time with instructors was something they felt aided in their success in the classroom, many of them responded that they did not have anyone that supported or believed in them outside of the classroom.

The results of these interviews were presented to the Fine Arts and Humanities Faculty during a departmental meeting at the end of the Spring 2018 semester.

Baseline Data:

The following charts illustrate that the Humanities Department has great success rate numbers overall but there is still a gap between the African American male student and the rest of the population. Since the Humanities Department has high success rates, Faculty in this department were asked what current strategies they employed in the classroom that they felt aided in student success and retention. Faculty provided the following feedback:

- Icebreakers on the first day of class, attempt to learn each student's name right away
- Making sure students are aware that instructors are available outside of the classroom and that instructors are here to help
- Reach out to students regularly to give updates on status and grades, missed work, and make-up opportunities
- Talk to students personally who are struggling to see if there is anything the instructor can do to help them and to encourage them
- Reaching out to students who start "ghosting" to make sure that everything is alright
- Play games, such as Jeopardy, to help students prepare for exams
- Incorporate technology into lessons and try to include activities that promote active learning and engaging discussions
- Give feedback and words of encouragement to students

Baseline Data:





Baseline Data:



Success Rates ABCD Pass

nce

Success Rates ABC



	All Other Students	African American Male Student	Difference
Fall 2016	79.9%	72.3%	- 7.6%
Spring 2017	83.7%	68.3%	- 15.4%
Fall 2017	83.0%	71.4%	- 11.6%

Improvement Plan:

Before the start of the Fall 2018 semester, faculty were informed on the feedback collected from the student interviews and were given the baseline data from Fall 2016, Spring 2017, and Fall 2017 on success rates of African American Male students in comparison to the rest of the student population within traditional lecture HUM101 courses. The collective feedback from faculty regarding current strategies employed in the class to increase success rates and retention was also shared. Faculty were asked to consider this information and apply this as they deemed fit to their Fall 2018 HUM101 courses.

Key Findings:

During the Spring 2019 semester, data was collected from one faculty member from one section in which the African American Male student population accounted for 6% of the class. This instructor implemented all of the strategies from the collective list of current strategies conducted by Humanities Faculty and made observations.

Success rates for this section broken down by grade:



A = 35%, B = 44%, C = 9%, D = 0%, F = 6%, W = 6%

The 6% of students that were part of the Focus Group were within the ABC Success Rates for this section.

Questions asked to instructor regarding experience:

1. What strategies did you find to be the most successful?

Reaching out to students/One on one meetings:

The instructor had four, one on one meetings with each student throughout the course of the semester to check in with them, inform them of their grade, discuss areas that they could improve and how, and to ask if they had any questions. The majority of the students appreciated this individual attention and showed improvements following each meeting.

One focus group student was having trouble getting to class on time before the first one on one meeting. After meeting with the student, the instructor discussed possible ways to help in arriving on time, which significantly improved after the first meeting. Another focus group student failed their first exam. During the next meeting, the instructor asked about study habits and gave suggestions on how to study for future exams. The grades of this student improved with every exam thereafter.

At the start of the semester, students within the focus group were not participating in discussions taking place in class. After speaking to these students individually, they were much more engaging in the discussion taking place.

Review Games:

In a way to help students to prepare for exams throughout the course, the instructor incorporates review games that cover the content for the exam. As a whole, feedback is positive from all students that the game helped them to prepare and to interact with the content as well as their classmates.

2. What were some of the challenges that you encountered in incorporating these strategies?

Within this class, there were two students that began missing several classes. Although the instructor reached out to the students, they were unsuccessful in being able to get in touch with the students to identify what the issue was and possible solutions. The result of this was one student withdrawing and one failing.

3. Based on your experience, what would you recommend for future semesters?

The instructor felt that each of the strategies should continue to be incorporated within each class. For future semesters, it is recommended that instructors give surveys throughout the semester to gage from students how they believe each of these strategies are aiding or deterring from their success in the class. Based on this feedback, instructors can reassess and meet the needs of that class, and of the individual students.

Implications for Practice:

Future plans include sharing this study with the entire Humanities Faculty at Moraine Valley Community College and gathering additional feedback from faculty on what they believed to be beneficial to the success of their students. In addition, post interviews should also be conducted with students to gain their perspective on what they believed to aid or deter from their success in the classroom. Expanding this study on a wider scale and collecting further data on the success of students will help to elicit what strategies will benefit at risk students. After compiling further data and feedback, the goal would be to identify which strategies will contribute to equity in at risk populations including African American Male, Latino, and lowincome students.

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Impactful Interventions for Students on Academic Probation

Teresa Hannon and Matthew Cullen

When we first started on this project, we had not been collecting data regarding reasons students on Academic Probation are not academically successful. Each counselor would keep a copy of the paper Academic Success Contract. Unfortunately, if the student interacted with a different counselor, the information on that original contract was not accessible. In order to gather data that we could access in a report format, we decided to go to a digital format to replace the paper Academic Success Contract. As a result, we were able to tailor the contract to focus on each of the academic restriction statuses. A bonus was that we were able to retrieve data we had not originally planned for that was connected to this Retention Academy Project. Below is a chart of those stats:



Self Reported Reasons for Low GPA

Students often have more than one reason that is attached to their academic struggles. As noted above, not studying enough, poor time management and the lack of motivation are the top three reasons students struggle academically. We plan to use this data to further improve academic restriction interventions. Based on our initial benchmarking of other colleges, we had originally planned on limiting the number of credits a student who is on Academic Probation could enroll in. However, we were unable to implement this type of intervention during the course of this project. We needed to collaborate with registration in order for this intervention to take place. It required the development of a new registration form so students would be able to register in person without removing their SOAP hold. This also would require students to meet with a counselor during the following semester for a "check in" and to have the hold remove. Meetings for this registration form started back in May of 2018, but because it was determined that such a registration form would have to be used by multiple departments the finalization of the form did not occur until April 2019.

Since we found the initial quantitative data for our project had too many variables, and as result, not useful, we used the information gleaned from a review of the literature connected to retention overall. We reviewed the work of Melinda Mechur Karp who described crucial non-academic support mechanisms that can enhance retention and completion. As noted earlier, one of the key "mechanisms" Karp described is the importance of students clarifying the reasons for attending college and taking particular coursework. Developing realistic and attainable education goals are also important to academic success. During the new Academic Probation intervention, counselors would focus students on their overall goal for attending Moraine Valley. Once that had been identified, the intervention would focus on developing SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timely) goals that would assist student reach their overall Moraine Valley goals.

Understanding the college culture in terms of academic expectation is another mechanism that Karp indicated can enhance student success. In our revised intervention, we focused on students' strengths and "adjustments needed" in terms of their academics. This focus often provided an opportunity for the counselors to educate students on realistic academic expectations (including amount of time needed for studying, seeking assistance in tutoring center and other key resources, etc.).

One other important aspect Karp designated is enhancing the feasibility of college life for those who have obstacles outside of their academics. During the revised academic probation session, counselors reviewed the key supportive services students had accessed to including counseling services. And since food insecurity and financial concerns are real obstacles for many college students, when appropriate, counselors ensured students knew about Project Care, which addresses those stressors.

We implemented the new intervention in summer of 2018 for those students who went on Academic Probation after Spring 2018. When reviewing the data for our intervention, we compared two groups of students: those that went on Academic Probation (AP) after 1.) 2017SP and 2.) 2018SP. Students that fell into the former group would have received an intervention, but it could have varied based on who they met with and when. Those who fell into the latter group received the new intervention, which was more consistent across Counselors and time of the year. While there are many different ways to look at the data and compare the groups, depending on when they first registered for the following semester, when they actually met with a counselor, how many classes they enrolled in, how many of them were developmental courses, etc., we initially wanted to see if our intervention efforts worked no matter what the characteristics of the student were. More specifically, we looked at students' status after they received an intervention. We considered the intervention strategy a success if the student was able to either maintain their AP status or improve to Good Standing.

Table 1: Academic Probation Students after the Spring 2017 & 2018 Semesters

	2017	2018
Did not drop to a lower status	69%	72%
Moved to suspension after following semester	31%	29%

As can be seen in Table 1, there was no significant difference between the two intervention strategies in terms of percent of students who are able to maintain or improve their status. Whether they had the new, more focused and structured intervention or the intervention was dependent on the Counselor, they were not dropping to a lower status at about the same rate. However, as we continued to look at the data, we realized there were some areas that had shown improvements; two that deal specifically with retention efforts.

Table 2: Registration in Semesters Following AP Intervention

	Enrolled in	Enrolled in Spring
	Fall after AP	after AP
Went on AP after 2017 Spring	52%	45%
Went on AP after 2018 Spring	63%	55%

First, as shown in Table 2, more students who had received the new intervention were likely to be enrolled in the semester following them being placed on AP than with the prior intervention approach. Specifically, 63% of those who went to AP in Spring 2018 versus only 52% of those who went to AP in Spring 2017 were enrolled. We also see that the second semester after they are placed on AP, 55% of students who received the new intervention were enrolled, whereas the same was true for only 45% of the students who met with a Counselor in 2017. That is an improvement of at least 10% for both statistics.

It is important note that the data sets for both was compromised on some level for the following reasons: students who were granted administrative withdrawal were not on the correct status, when students have missing or incomplete grades, status is not updated, repeated grades can impact status in ways we cannot see unless we drill down into the data.

We would be remiss if we did not address how the newly implemented (Fall 2018) SOAP policy effected our project. With the new SOAP policy, our overall number of students who ended up Academic Probation after Fall 2018 included students who were not only on academic probation but who were, in the past, considered on continued caution and continued probation as well. Additional longer term ramifications could be that because the new SOAP policy includes students who take one or more credits (as opposed to 12 or more credits), students may end up on all restrictions sooner than later. Furthermore, academic statuses were updated after summer 2018 for the first time. In the past, the summer semester could not directly negatively impact academic status.

Moving forward, we would like to begin using the newly developed registration form to ensure students meet with a counselor for a second time and limit the number of credits that students on Academic Probation can enroll in. The current plan is to implement this additional intervention piece after Fall 2019 semester. There are logistical concerns that need to still be addressed. For one, a thorough counselor training needs to be created and executed in order to ensure all counselors are using credit limits to best serve the student. And a system to remove all outstanding PERC holds for students who never came in for their "check in" appointment needs to be developed.

In terms of scalability, we have already integrated components of this intervention to other academic statuses. For example, we no longer use the paper Academic Success Contract and are instead using the digital form for all academic restriction interventions. Furthermore, we do plan to use the new registration form and credit limits for a smaller population during summer 2018, for those students who submit a suspension appeal or dismissal reapplication form.

Additionally, since the new SOAP policy increased the number of students on all academic restrictions by 30%, we need to examine how to ensure that students who are on academic restriction have access to a counselor intervention. For example during this past winter supplemental period, there were only 8 days after academic statuses were run and before the beginning of the semester. After Fall 2018 there were approximately 1800 students who were on academic restriction (Caution, Probation, Suspension, Dismissal). This does not include students who wish to return after suspension or dismissal. It also does not include students counselors see to gain permission for Ability to Benefit. Over those 8 days, counselors saw 685 students for academic counseling (all levels of academic restriction and ability to benefit). Obviously we end up seeing student during the first few weeks of the semester in order to clear their SOAP hold which is not ideal.

Despite all the variables that negatively affected the ability of the Counseling and Career Development Center to implement the new Academic Probation intervention as originally planned, we were still able to see improvements, specifically in terms of student retention. Knowing this, we can continue moving forward with the new intervention, while adjusting based on feedback from Counselors and considering what the data shows versus what was expected. With changes already planned and finally being able to implement certain strategies that were originally slotted to be a part of the intervention, the Counselors are eager to continue strengthening the work they do with students on Probation. The basic foundation of a more effective and intrusive way of helping students avoid moving to Academic Suspension is definitely present. Honing the process will allow it to grow into the intervention we are expecting.

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Improving Online In-Course Success Rates

Dr. Cynthia Anderson, Dr. Sara Gallagher, and Jim Snooks

Abstract

This research project employed a collaborative approach to researching and developing an intervention focused on improving in-course level success rates of online students and retention. A course level customizable student orientation module (referred to as a "Getting Started" module was created with the input of Moraine Valley's online students and faculty, as well as external research. Eleven courses participated in the study. The aggregate in course ABC Success Rate and Retention rates improved 6.21% and 4.45% respectively.

Retention Academy Key Findings and Analysis

Surveys Key Findings

With the support of Institutional Research, two separate surveys were sent to online faculty and in Spring of 2018. The surveys consisted of open-ended (free-form) and close-ended questions.

Student Survey

The 6-question survey had 263 respondents.

Question 1: Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following during the first few weeks of the course.

	Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly	Does not	Total
	Agree			Disagree	apply	
The course was easy to	47.71%	40.46%	8.02%	3.82%	0.00%	262
navigate.	125	106	21	10	0	
The course syllabus was	75.29%	23.95%	0.76%	0.00%	0.00%	263
available.	198	63	2	0	0	
The course description	68.20%	27.59%	3.83%	0.38%	0.00%	261
was available.	178	72	10	1	0	
Instructor contact	72.90%	26.34%	0.76%2	0.00%	0.00%	262
information was	191	69		0	0	
provided.						
The course objectives	58.40%	33.21%	5.73%	1.91%5	0.76%	262
were clearly defined.	153	87	15		2	
The textbook was clearly	58.40%	33.21%	5.73%	1.91%5	0.76%	262
identified	153	87	15		2	
The course schedule was	62.74%	30.80%	3.80%	0.76%2	1.90%	263
provided.	165	81	10		5	
The course policies were	63.50%	34.22%	1.52%	0.76%	0.00%	263
shared.	167	90	4	2	0	
The grading policy was	65.78%	31.18%	2.28%6	0.38%	0.38%	263
available.	173	82		1	1	
The communication	62.36%	33.46%	3.42%	0.38%	0.38%	263
policy was available.	164	88	9	1	1	
A welcome video/ letter	53.05%	35.11%	8.02%	2.29%	1.53%	262
was provided.	139	92	21	6	4	
The instructor responded	51.53%	35.11%	5.73%	3.82%	3.82%	262
in a timely manner.	135	92	15	10	10	
Feedback was provided	45.42%	38.55%	8.78%	4.96%	2.29%	262
in a timely manner.	119	101	23	13	6	
Instructions were	47.15%	38.78%	7.60%	3.80%	2.66%	263
provided to assist in	124	102	20	10	7	
course navigation.						
I was provided tips to	46.77%	33.46%	11.03%	6.46%	2.28%	263
succeed.	123	88	29	17	6	
Instructor provided an	47.15%	31.56%	14.83%	5.70%	0.76%	263
estimate of the amount	124	83	39	15	2	
of time required weekly						
to be successful in the						
course.						

Question 2: Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the first few weeks of the course.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does not apply	Total
Interactions with	32.82%	37.02%	12.21%	7.25%	10.69%	262
classmates were	86	97	32	19	28	
encouraged during the						
first few weeks of class.						
I felt I made a	22.99%	36.78%	20.31%	11.88%	8.05%	261
connection with the	60	96	53	31	21	
instructor during the						
first few weeks of class.						
Thinking back on your	42.21%	42.97%	9.89%	4.56%	0.38%	263
first week in an online	111	113	26	12	1	
class or classes you						
completed, the						
instructor(s) provided						
me with the background						
information I need to						
succeed in the course.						

Question 3: Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does not apply	Total
Online classes are easier than face to face courses.	17.87% 47	32.32% 85	34.98% 92	13.31% 35	1.52% 4	263
Time management had a negative impact on my success in an online course.	8.78% 23	19.85% 52	36.64% 96	29.01% 76	5.73% 15	262
I would have benefited by being provided specific time management tips/strategies.	11.79% 31	30.42% 80	28.14% 74	13.31% 35	16.35% 43	263
My instructor clearly shared how to get started with the course.	48.29% 127	40.68% 107	6.84% 18	3.04% 8	1.14% 3	263

Question 4: What advice would you give a student considering an online class? Please list several points.

Students were provided an opportunity to provide open-ended responses.

Answer Choices	Responses		Total
Point 1		100%	174
Point 2		87.93%	153
Point 3		67.24%	117
Point 4		41.38%	72

Question 5: What was your greatest challenge with online learning? Please list several points.

Students were provided an opportunity to provide open-ended responses.

Answer Choices	Responses	Total
Point 1	100%	161
Point 2	62.73%	101
Point 3	28.57%	46
Point 4	11.80%	19

Question 6: What are three things you wish your instructor told you within the first few weeks of the course?

Students were provided an opportunity to provide open-ended responses.

Answer Choices	Responses	Total
Point 1	100%	95
Point 2	48.42%	46
Point 3	31.58%	30

Online Faculty Survey

Questions 1-13

The 19 question survey had 54 respondents.

Question	Responses (54)
1. Do you include a welcome video?	22.22% (12) Yes
2. Do you include a welcome letter?	90.38% (47) Yes
3. Do you include instructor contact information?	98.15% (53) Yes
4. Do you provide a communication policy? Re: I respond to emails within X hours/days.	77.78% (42) Yes
5. Are students given an assignment to get to know their instructor? Re: A low point value assignment such as a questionnaire.	37.04% (20) Yes
6. Do you include information on assignment expectations? Re: Discussion boards, assignments, papers, and projects.	98.15% (53) Yes
7. Do you address the time committed expected each week for successful completion of the coursework?	77.78% (42) Yes
8. Do you offer information on plagiarism and academic dishonesty?	94.4% (51) Yes
9. Do you provide textbook information outside the syllabus? Re: A separate module item.	71.70% (38) Yes
10. Do you offer links to college resources? Re: Tutoring Center, Writing Center, Tech Tutors.	77.78% (42) Yes
11. Do you include a syllabus quiz?	33.33% (18) Yes
12. Are students given an assignment to get to know classmates? Re: Discussion boards, scavenger hunt.	70.37% (38) Yes
13. How important is time management for student success in an online	90.57 % (48)
course?	Very Important
	11.32% (6)
	Important
	1.89% (1) Somewhat Important
	1.89% (1)
	Not Important

Question 14

In your experience, please rank from 1 - 3 the most common cause for lack of student success with regard to completion of assignments and their relationship to an "ABC" success rate in your online course(s).

Answer Choices	1	2	3	Total
Missing assignments	67.31% (35)	11.54% (6)	21.15% (11)	52
Poor assignment scores	11.54% (6)	40.38% (21)	48.08% (25)	52
Time spent on assignment	21.15% (11)	48.08% (25)	30.77% (16)	52

Question 15

How many total hours per week do you feel a student needs to spend on the completion of all course related work to achieve an "ABC" success rate as a final grade in your course(s)?

Answer Choices	Responses
2 hours	2.13% (1)
3 hours	12.77% (6)
4 hours	36.17% (17)
5 hours	19.15% (9)
6 hours	34.04% (16)
Total Responses	47

Faculty were provided an opportunity to provide open-ended responses.

Other (Please specify)

- Since it's a 3 credit hour course, this will include weekly assignments, quizzes and study preparation
- **1**0
- 8 hours
- For a 4 contact hour course
- Six hours would be minimum. More like 8-10.
- 6- 8hours
- 2 to 6 hours dependent upon student skill and capability.
- 8 double the credit hours, and add one for kicks (builds character)
- 8-10 hours

Question 16: In your opinion, what are the three top reasons students do not finish a course with an "ABC" success rate? Please be as specific as possible.

Faculty were provided an opportunity to provide open-ended responses.

Answer Choices	Responses	Total
Reason 1	100%	51
Reason 2	96.08%	49
Reason 3	88.27%	44

Question 17: What do you believe are the five most important items to include as the foundation for a quality orientation module? Re: Welcome video, syllabus quiz, sample assignments, student introductions.

Faculty were provided an opportunity to provide open-ended responses.

Answer Choices	Responses	Total
ltem 1	100%	49
ltem 2	95.92%	47
Item 3	87.76%	43
Item 4	67.35	33
Item 5	59.18	29

Question 18: What would you tell a student taking an online class for the first time to expect?

Faculty were provided an opportunity to provide open-ended responses. The researches received responses from 49 of the 54 participants.

Intervention Key Findings

Eleven online courses participated in the study. The online faculty volunteered to be in the study. Nine of the eleven courses compared Fall 2017 to Fall 2018 data. Two courses compared Spring 2018 to Fall 2018 courses (courses 7 & 9 in Table 2).

In order to provide comparisons to National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP) statistic, the researchers used the same mathematical formulas to ABC Success and Withdrawal. Table 1 provides an aggregate of the 11 courses that participated, comparing the original semester to the intervention semester. Courses had a 68.11% ABC Success rate in the original semester which increased to a 74.32% ABC Success rate in the intervention semester. This is a positive difference of 6.21%.

The courses showed an increase retention. The original semester had an 85.83% retention rate as compared to a 90.27% retention rate during the intervention semester. This is an increased student retention of 4.45%.

Table 1: ABC Success and Retention Aggregate							
Semester Intervention Semester Difference							
ABC Success	68.11%	74.32%	6.21%				
Retention	85.83%	90.27	4.45%				

Table 2 provides a detailed ABC success and withdrawal by course.

Table 2: ABC Success and Withdrawal by Course								
Baseline Semester	Total Seats	Withdrawals	ABC Success		Intervention Semester	Total Seats	Withdrawals	ABC Success
Course 1	25	1	23		Course 1	23	2	20
Course 2	23	1	15		Course 2	23	0	19
Course 3	12	5	1		Course 3	18	4	5
Course 4	23	2	19		Course 4	25	2	19
Course 5	24	9	10		Course 5	22	7	13
Course 6	24	0	22		Course 6	25	2	16
Course 7	24	3	16		Course 7	23	1	20
Course 8	25	2	20		Course 8	24	3	15
Course 9	24	1	17		Course 9	24	1	19
Course 10	25	9	12		Course 10	25	0	24
Course 11	25	3	18		Course 11	25	3	21
Totals	254	36	173		Totals	257	25	191

Analysis of Key Findings

The researchers used a combination of related published research, as well as student and faculty survey results to select topics and materials for the Getting Started module in Canvas. The Getting Started module included unpublished information, additional resources and instructions for faculty with editable templates in Canvas.

- 1. Information for Faculty (unpublished)
- 2. Welcome Letter and Video Tips (unpublished)
- 3. Welcome
- 4. Instructor Contact Information
- 5. Syllabus Information
- 6. Icebreakers (unpublished)
- 7. Student Questionnaire (unpublished)
- 8. Student Questionnaire
- 9. Discussion Board Expectations & Getting to Know You (unpublished)
- 10. Discussion Board Expectations
- 11. Getting to Know Yu
- 12. Support for Students: Course and Canvas Support
- 13. Support for Students: Frequently Asked Questions About Online Learning
- 14. Support for Students: Campus Support Services
- 15. Support for Students: Tips to Succeed (unpublished)
- 16. Support for Students: Tips to Succeed
- 17. Getting Started Module Quiz (unpublished)
- 18. Getting Started Module Quiz

Student and Faculty Surveys Themes

Three common themes were shared by the students and faculty in the survey. Both groups developed themes around time management, communication and organization.

Time Management & Organization

Faculty believed that students needed better time management skills. Faculty shared comments referring to students procrastinating, not giving enough time for course work and overall lack of time-potentially due to difficulty managing multiple priorities in work, life and academics.

Time management is the #1 reported challenge by Moraine Valley online students. When students were asked to provide advice to a student considering taking an online course and what was your greatest challenge with online learning, overwhelmingly time management was

mentioned in the open-ended responses. However, when students were asked to rate "Time management had a negative impact on my success in an online course." less than 30% selected strongly agree or agree.

The themes of time management and organization shared characteristics. For instance, both faculty and students referred to students organizing their time. However, when students mentioned organization, they also provided examples regarding the organization of the course and difficulty navigating the course. For example, one student wrote "Every teacher sets up their online class differently." However, approximately 88% of shared that they strongly agreed or agreed that the course was easy to navigate.

Communication

Communication was the second most prevalent theme for faculty and students in the free-form responses. Both faculty and students agree that communication is important. Faculty noted that they want to students to reach out to them when they don't understand something or have questions. Students noted the lack of communication with instructors made online courses difficult in the open-ended questions. For example, students noted challenges included lack of timely feedback. However, in the closed ended questions 83.97% strongly agree or agreed feedback was provided in a timely manner. As well as 86.64% students strongly agreed or agreed the instructor responded in a timely manner. Additionally, 59.77% of students reported strongly agreeing or agreeing that they made a connection with the instructor during the first few weeks of class. Essentially, the open-ended question responses and close-ended questions highlight the importance of faculty-student communication.

The importance of student-student communication was also reported primarily by students. Less than 70% reported that interactions with classmates were encouraged during the first few weeks of class. In the open-ended questions, students reported that communication was a challenge with other students. One student shared "NO HUMAN INTERACTION!"

Intervention Analysis of Key Findings

The results of this small study are promising. By adding the intervention, the aggregate ABC Success and retention percentages were above the MVCC rates. Once the intervention was added, the rates surpassed the NCCBP National Median.

Table 3: ABC Success and Retention Compared to MVCC and National Median						
	Semester	Intervention Semester	MVCC	National Median		
		(Fall 2018)	(Fall 2015/16)	(Fall 2015 & 16)		
ABC Success	68.11%	74.32%	64.6%/66.5%	69%		
Retention	85.83%	90.27%	83.3%/83.8%	88%		

Implications for Practice

Future Implementation and Scalability

In the spring of 2019, the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) began offering faculty participating in Online Course Development (OCD) the option to include the module faculty after the initial positive results. The plan is to continue to offer faculty an option to use, adopt or adapt the module as they determine to be most appropriate.

The business department on campus is using the module in their efforts to increase online course success rates as a part of PIE for AY19-20. They plan on a few modifications.

The CTL is researching opportunities to share the module with faculty. There are at least two options including Canvas Commons and MVConnect. The CTL will have instructions available for faculty to review and can assist anyone needing further guidance. Additionally, the CTL plans on communicating the availability of the module through the Online Advisory Team, MVConnect, MVeNews, the CTL website and through committees and meetings.

Implications

Based on the three prominent themes of time management, organization and communication, it's important to intentionally incorporate strategies, resources and guidance in those areas.

As we continue to move forward, we'll need to maintain the resources provided and garner feedback for future improvements. The results in this small research project are positive. If more data were gathered, there may be different implications for practice. As of this study, the researchers found that providing students a "Getting Started" module had a positive impact on online course success rates and retention rates.

Recommendations and Next Steps

We would like to encourage faculty to incorporate the module into their online courses. It would be of great interest to gather further data that may support the increased ABC success and retention rates. Additionally, we would recommend future studies using hybrid courses.

Increasing Student Retention in General Education Math by Eliminating Online Withdrawal

Dr. Amy Madden and Frank Johnson

A current focus of higher education is retention and completion. Many institutions are implementing strategies and programs aimed at increasing the retention rate. An increase in retention should lead to an increase in completion rates. Most degree programs require at least one course in mathematics. Successfully completing a required math course is a common barrier for students in completing their degrees. Our research project focuses on increasing retention in the General Education Math course, a course that fulfills the general education mathematics requirement for many types of degrees and certificates.

The General Education Mathematics course at Moraine Valley Community College is a three-credit hour course, with an Intermediate Algebra (or equivalent) prerequisite. Students in the course may have taken up to three developmental mathematics courses prior to enrolling in this course. It is important that the College make every effort to help these students complete the General Education Mathematics course on their first attempt. The focus of this project is to decrease the number of students who withdraw from the course for reasons that could be avoided. We propose to require students to speak with an instructor or Student Success specialist before processing the withdrawal. We will track students to determine if this type of intervention improves retention and success in the course.

Students may withdraw from a course for a variety of reasons. Some of the difficulties that may arise for students during a semester may have solutions, besides withdrawal from the class. There may be college programs, financial aid, tutoring resources, etc. that students may not realize can benefit them and help them complete the semester. By requiring students to speak with an instructor or Student Success Specialist, we seek to identify the reasons students are withdrawing from the General Education Mathematics course and identify solutions (other than withdrawal) for these situations. As a result, we hope to improve retention rates for the course and success rates.

Research Overview

Moraine Valley has piloted the restricted withdrawal policy in other courses: BIO 180 and CSC 140. In the short time of the pilot, there have been mixed results.

CSC 140 (before intervention)

Semester	Success Rate	Withdrawal Rate
2013FA	55.2%	17.9%
2014SP	68.1%	15.9%
2014FA	48.9%	27.3%
2015SP	73.1%	14.9%
2015FA	58.3%	20.0%

CSC 140 (after intervention)

Semester	Success Rate	Withdrawal Rate
2016FA	68.7%	11.3%
2017SP	69.7%	12.8%
2017FA	75.9%	9.5%
2018SP	77.8%	10.3%
2018FA	72.3%	10.8%

BIO 180 (before intervention)

Semester	Success Rate	Withdrawal Rate
2015SP	59.9%	24.1%
2015FA	62.9%	22.6%
2016SP	68.3%	24.7%
2016FA	56.7%	24.8%

BIO 180 (after intervention)

Semester	Success Rate	Withdrawal Rate
2017SP	67.5%	13.6%
2017FA	61.7%	23.9%
2018SP	52.7%	27.1%
2018FA	51.4%	29.8%

Also, EAB provided results of a project at New Mexico Junior College. Students attempting to withdraw were given a 48 hour "cooling off" period before the withdrawal request was processed. At the time of the withdrawal request, the faculty member was notified and could contact the student. Results from this effort were a decrease in the withdrawal rate, from 14.5% in 2012 to 10.3% in 2014.

Row Labels	A, B, C total	Sum of W_count	Total	Success Rate	Withdrawal Rate
2015FA	278	61	447	62.2%	13.6%
2015SP	302	38	430	70.2%	8.8%
2016FA	310	63	460	67.4%	13.7%
2016SP	313	41	452	69.2%	9.1%
2017FA	296	53	449	65.9%	11.8%
2017SP	280	51	432	64.8%	11.8%
2018SP	284	67	459	61.9%	14.6%
Total	2063	374	3129	65.9%	12.0%

For the MTH 120 course at MVCC, recent success rates and withdrawal rates are shown below:

Improvement Plan

There are two parts to the implementation. The first concerns the background mechanics of restricting withdrawal through the Colleague student record system. The second part is communicating with faculty and students in MTH 120. Academic Services was contacted to program all MTH 120 sections to not allow online withdrawal after the add-drop period. Faculty were contacted before each semester and provided with syllabus language and the necessary drop forms (see attached). The Dean of Science, Business, and Computer Technology emailed all MTH 120 students at various points of the semester to remind them of the withdrawal process and attached the withdrawal form.

To collect data, we used the Dashboard available through the Research Office. We analyzed success rates and withdrawal rates before and after the project.

Key Findings

The data collected for the Fall 2018 semester:

Row Labels	Sum of W_count	A, B, C total	Total	Success Rate	Withdrawal Rate
2018FA	47	312	473	66.0%	9.9%

There was a slight decrease in the withdrawal rate while the success rate remained steady.

Students who completed a Withdrawal Form were asked to give their reasons for withdrawing from the class. A list of reasons was provided and the student could choose multiple reasons.

Typical reasons students gave for withdrawing:

Personal, family, or job	70%
Not satisfied with current grade	30%
Other (not specified)	30%
Academically unprepared	20%
Dislike course or instruction	10%
Financial reasons	10%

70% of the students claim they receive financial aid.

Next Steps

The pilot will continue for the 19-20 academic year.

Attachments

1) Withdrawal form

Moraine Valley Community College

Withdrawal Form for MTH 120

You may not withdraw from MTH 120 online. In order to withdraw from MTH 120 (after the drop/add period has ended), you must follow these steps.

- 1. Complete this form.
- 2. Obtain a signature from your MTH 120 instructor or from Dr. DeWitt Scott, Student Success Specialist, G 251.
- 3. Submit the completed form in person to Registration in Building S.

Student Colleague ID number:		
st Name: First Name:		
Email:		
Phone number:		
check here if you are receiving Financial Ai	d	
check here if you are a Veteran		
Request WITHDRAW from:		
Course: MTH 120	Section:	
Title: General Education Mathematics	Number of Credits: 3	
Instructor:		
Total credits you are taking after withdrawal:		
Please indicate your reason for withdrawing from the class (choose all that apply):		
 a. not satisfied with current grade b. dislike course, method of instruction c. was not prepared academically for the o d. financial reasons e. personal/family/job reasons f. other 	course	
Student signature:	Date:	
Instructor or Student Success Specialist signature	::	
	Date:	

2) Syllabus Language

Should you consider withdrawing from this course after the drop deadline, you will need to complete a withdrawal verification form. You will not be able to withdraw from the course online through MVConnect. As a pilot project aimed to improve student success, the withdrawal process will involve a communication with either your instructor or a student success specialist prior to making your final withdrawal decision. Further information about the process for withdrawing and the withdrawal verification form can be found at the end of the syllabus.

3) Message to Students from Dean

From: Nagle, Ryen
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2019 10:07 AM
To: Nagle, Ryen <<u>nagler@morainevalley.edu</u>>
Subject: Regarding Your Spring 2019 MTH 120 Course Section

Hello MTH 120 Student,

I hope you are having a good start to your semester at Moraine Valley. You are receiving this e-mail because you are currently enrolled in a Spring 2019 section of General Education Mathematics.

Withdrawal Policy for MTH 120 Students

Hopefully you have had an opportunity to review the policies for the course in your syllabus, and you may have noticed the withdraw policy for this course is unique.

Making an Informed Withdrawal Decision

I am confident you will have a positive learning experience in this course, but you may at some point consider the option to withdraw from the course. There are many good and valid reasons to withdraw from a course. However, sometimes students do not fully understand the impact of their withdrawal or know about the resources the college can provide to help them succeed.

Details about the Withdrawal Process for MTH 120

Should you consider withdrawing from this course, you will need to complete a withdrawal verification form. You will not be able to withdraw from the course online through MVConnect. As a pilot project aimed to improve student success, the withdraw process will involve a communication with either your instructor or a student success specialist prior to making your final withdraw decision. Further information about the process for withdrawing can be found on the form attached to this e-mail.

My best wishes to you on a successful semester, and please feel free to contact me, your instructor, or the student success office if you have any questions about this communication.

Sincerely,

Ryen Nagle, Ed.D. Dean of Science, Business and Computer Technology Moraine Valley Community College 9000 W. College Parkway Palos Hills, IL 60465

Office: C 154 / Phone: (708) 974-5679

4) Attachment in Message to Students from Dean


Student Success in Medical Terminology Courses

Colette Schrank

Review of the Literature

Introduction: Research Topic, Focus and Problem

Medical Terminology (MRT-110) is a foundation course and serves as either a prerequisite or a co-requisite for every program in the Health Sciences (HS) at Moraine Valley Community College, Palos Hills, IL. Students literally learn the 'language of medicine' in a 3semester course covering the basics of medical terminology and terms commonly used to describe organs, diseases, lab and clinical procedures for everybody system. MRT-110 also complements BIO-180, Human Anatomy & Physiology I, and BIO-181, Human Anatomy & Physiology II, other prerequisite courses for many of the HS programs

The focus of this research project: "Success in MRT-110" primarily addresses MVCC Strategic Priorities and Goals A: Student Success: The college will strengthen its focus on students' college and career successes. More specifically this project addresses the following: SS.2: Identify needs and barriers to student success and develop and implement programs to address them.

SS.3: Support and develop programs and services and curriculum to strengthen college readiness of students.

- SS.4: Develop more sophisticated tracking of student performance.
- SS.6: Improve student success by increasing staff engagement.
- SS.8: Improve student achievement on learning outcomes.
- SS.9: Improve retention and completion rates.

The problem relates to the number of students failing the Final Exam. Approximately, 24% or 122 out of 508 MRT-110 students failed the Final Exam during the Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 semesters. Of the 122 students 46% (56) earned a "D" or an "F" in the course.

Research Questions

1. What is the correlation between reading level and failing the MRT-110 course?

2. Will incorporating success strategies increase the percentage of students passing the MRT-110 Final Exam and/or the course?

Review of the Literature

Student retention in the medical terminology course not only encompasses remaining in the course until completion, it also involves successful completion of the course, admittedly learning the material to earn a "B" or an "A." Medical Terminology, MRT-110, is a prerequisite or co-requisite to all the Health Science Programs; and, MRT-110 is a 'success course' to some highly competitive selective admission programs, e.g. Radiologic Technology. A 'success course' earns double the points for an "A", "B" or a "C" in the admission review. Some students have earned a "B" in MRT-110 only to retake the course to earn and "A" in a subsequent application to the RAD Tech program.

Medical terminology is the 'language of medicine' and all things related to health care. A firm understanding of these terms is tantamount to administering quality health care to patients. A cursory understanding of medical terms can lead to misinterpretation, confusion of doctor's orders and subsequent treatment. Hence, it is incumbent on the instructor to cultivate a solid understanding of medical terminology in MRT-110 and to promote student attendance and retention as integral components of the process.

According to the article "Persistence & Completion Academy Projects," Higher Learning Commission, August 2017, one of the first steps in a project is to perform a needs assessment, i.e. "examine characteristics and needs of subpopulations, e.g. underprepared, transitional, online, athletes."

As stated earlier the problem under investigation is the rate of 24% student failure on the Final Exam in the FA16 and SP17 semesters. The three parameters to investigate include: (1) student preparedness in advance of taking MRT-110, (2) structure of the course and support for students and (3) student engagement beyond completing assignments, i.e. student directed learning.

Student Preparedness in Advance of Taking MRT-110

Sayer *et al* (2002) reported that "the causes of academic failure were widespread and ranged from deficient study skills to financial, domestic and emotional problems." Though taking a reading test has been in place at Moraine Valley Community College for many years, in 2016 the mandatory reading placement testing process for MRT-110 registration was instituted. Students attaining a score of 71 or higher on the Accuplacer Reading test enabled them to register for MRT-110. Students scoring 51-70 on the AccuR test were directed to taking a remedial reading course, RDG-091. Moving forward students are required to attain a "C" or higher in RDG-091 in order to register for MRT-110.

Preliminary findings from the Composite Group Analysis of the SP18 MRT-110 Mid-term Exam and data collected from the MVCC Institutional Research & Planning Dept. indicated there were four students who scored in the "51-70" range on the Accuplacer R test twice before taking RDG-091. These four students earned a "C" enabling each of them to register for MRT-110. Three of these four students (75%) scored between 39% - 53% (39%, 41% and 53%) on the Mid-term Exam. The fourth student earning a "C" in RDG-091 scored 92% on the Mid-term Exam; this student took the full time allotted for the exam.

Additionally, ten students who scored in the "51-70" range on the Accuplacer R test earned a "B" in RDG-091. Of these ten students three student (30%) scored between 55%-64% (55%, 56% and 64%) on the Mid-term Exam. The remaining seven students (70%) scored between 71% - 97% (71%, 74%, 78%, 78%, 79%, 89% and 97%).

The last student evaluated who scored in the "51-70" range on the Accuplacer R test earned an "A" in RDG-091 and scored 99% on the Mid-term Exam.

In conversation with Joe Chaloka, Dept. Chair, Developmental Education, (04/2018) the grade scale for RDG-091 is:

Pass and advance to "transfer level":

- * A = 90-100%
- * B = 80-89%
- * C = 70-79%

Not pass and cannot pass to "transfer level" and must retake RDG-091:

- * D = 60-69%
- * F = 59% and below

Based on this preliminary data of fourteen students it appears that students who earn a "C" in RDG-091 struggle in MRT-110, continue to be weak and are at risk of passing the course not to speak of the poor level of comprehension attained in the course. The odds of passing MRT-110 are greater for those who earn a "B" in RDG-091, however, five of the ten evaluated earned 79% or less on the Mid-term Exam. It is not known if these five students a low "B", mid-"B" or high "B" in RDG-091. The lone student who scored an "A" in RDG-091 scored a near perfect score, 99%, on the Mid-term Exam. These data, though a small sample population, suggest that the higher the score in RDG-091, the greater likelihood of comprehension and recall of medical terms and in demonstrating that knowledge on the Mid-term Exam.

The first of the research questions: "What is the correlation between reading level and failing the MRT-110 course?" seems to be answered with the preliminary data described in the above paragraph.

These data, though a small sample population, suggest that the higher the score in RDG-091, the greater likelihood of comprehension and recall of medical terms and in demonstrating that knowledge on the Mid-term Exam. At present a passing grade of "C" in RDG-091 merits registration for MRT-110. If data from the next population of students bears similar results, it is suggested that the MRT-110 faculty review these data and recommend that a passing grade of "B" or higher become the criterion for registration to MRT-110.

Structure of the Course and Support for Students

The second parameter to review is that of structure of the course and support for students. Each section of MRT-110 follows a standardized syllabus, uses the same textbook and PowerPoint lectures and standardized Mid-term and Final exams. Except for the online sections and those taught at the extension sites, Blue Island and Tinley Park, the main campus face-to-face sections are taught in B183, replete with models and posters. All MRT-110 instructors begin with the standard course website in Canvas learning management system (LMS), and are instructed in the use of 'clickers' (classroom response system, CRS) and in Kahoot.it, web-based CRS. These CRS offer educational opportunities to students at levels they aptly relate to (Cate & Dunrning, 2007). Additionally, MRT-110 instructors are encouraged to post 1st quarter, Mid-term, 3rd quarter grades, if not done by Canvas LMS.

Additional support for MRT-110 students is access to the publisher's website for the text. Campus support includes: the Tutor Center, technology tutoring, HELP Desk, advisors and counselors.

Student Engagement Beyond Completing Assignments

The third discussion point relates to student engagement beyond completing assignments, i.e. student directed learning. As a part of student support and in engaging students MRT-110 instructors are encouraged to administer an online evaluation of learning styles, "Index of Learning Styles Questionnaire" by Soloman and Felder during week 1 in the semester. The instructor may follow-up with an explanation of results of the inventory: active *vs.* reflective; sensing *vs.* intuitive; visual *vs.* verbal; and, sequential *vs.* global. Soloman and Felder provide an explanation of the results/dimensions and offer suggestions to enhance one's preferences for learning. Mattick & Knight, 2007, suggest developing an 'information' questionnaire to solicit 'barriers' that students may have and to assist students with these issues early on in the semester and potentially modify the curricula.

To encourage attendance and punctuality the instructor can give points for attendance as part of the course grade. In terms of punctuality the instructor can offer an 'extra credit' question within the first five minutes of the class; Rita Kealy (2018) coined this practice the "Bell Ringer." Mattick & Knight, 2007, further embrace a deeper approach to learning and studying by students incorporating organizational and time management skills as well as reflecting on learning. Henderson *et al.*, (2001) suggest a "written student evaluation of their own learning, including reflection..." to "support student responsibility for learning" Dannefer (2013). To the latter MRT-110 instructors have been asked to implement the Mid-term Grade Reflection Paper after the mid-term grades have been posted. For the SP18 semester this activity was optional, i.e. an assignment or for extra credit.

Mattick & Knight (2007) and Cate & Durning (2007) cite student involvement throughout the semester beyond didactic assignments to promote self-directed learning. In MRT-110 this may translate into opportunities to (1) take one's blood pressure and pulse, chapter 11: Cardiovascular; (2) develop a 'Stop Smoking' plan as a part of chapter 12: Respiratory; (3) donate a unit of blood as a part of chapter 13: Blood (4) take an online color blindness test, chapter 17: Eye and Ear; and several other options in the form of discussion item questions. Cate & Durning (2007) extol these extrinsic motivators as opportunities for selfdirected learning and for students to develop a greater sense of "competence, autonomy and relatedness" to the course content and the instructor.

In summary, Rezaee & Nabeiei (2015) reference Malcolm Knowles' definition of selfdirected learning (SDL) as:

a process in which each person takes the initiative to identify their own learning needs and objectives, identify resources and materials needed to learn, choose and apply suitable learning strategies and assess their learning outcomes, with or without the help of others....In other words, SDL refers to the learner's degree of responsibility for his/her own learning.

The second research question: Will incorporating success strategies increase the percentage of students passing the MRT-110 Final Exam and/or the course? hopefully will be answered with encouraging results upon the collection of data later this year.

Data Collection Supporting Preliminary Findings

It was suggested to retrospectively review a larger pool of students on an exam to potentially support or refute the preliminary findings. Hence, five semesters, SP18, FA17, SU17, SP17 and FA16 were selected.

In retrospective review of Mid-term scores vs. reading scores on RDG-091 and IEL-096 (later added as a prerequisite for MRT-110) analysis of these five semesters of data (encompassing 1215 students) indicated that when students:

* earn a "C" in RDG-091 or IEL-096 approximately 47% will earn an "A", "B" or "C" in MRT-110; **53% will earn a "D" or "F" or withdraw**.

* earn a "B" in RDG-091 or IEL-096 approximately 71% will earn an "A", "B" or "C" in MRT-110; **29% will earn a "D" or "F" or withdraw.**

* earn an "A" in RDG-091 or IEL-096 approximately 85% will earn an "A", "B" or "C" in MRT-110; **15% will earn a "D" or "F" or withdraw**.

As stated earlier in this report: a grade of "C" in RDG-091 and IEL-096 begins at 70%; "B" at 80%; and, "A" at 90%. Clearly when students earn a "B" or "A" in either of these two reading courses, their success rate increases dramatically.

Secondarily...student failure rate on an exam may be dependent on external factors, e.g. class delivery: F2F vs. online and class size: <20 students vs. 21+ students (see following table).

Student Failure rate dependent on external factors				
Class delivery vs. Failure rate				
	F2F	Online		
Failure rate	28.3% (47/166); students more inclined to depend on instructor for learning, assuming that being in the classroom the student will automatically learn more or better comprehend	20.6% (20/97); students more motivated to work independently; perhaps utilize time management skills and organization skills out of perceived necessity		
Class size vs. Failure rate				
	20 students or less	21 students or more	Exam failure rate is based on how many took Final exam per total number of students taking the exam (not based on capacity of class size). F2F sections (not arranged in numerical section order): * $9/23 = 39\%$ * $9/24 = 37.5\%$ * $9/26 = 34.6\%$ * $9/30 = 30\%$ * $8/29 = 27.5\%$ * $2/10 = 20\%$ * $1/9 = 11.1\%$ * $0/15 = 0\%$	
			<i>Online sections</i> (not arranged in numerical section order): * 6/21 = 28.6% * 4/18 = 22.2% * 4/18 = 22% * 4/19 = 21% * 2/21 = 9.4%	

Next Steps in Achieving Student Success in Medical Terminology

* Meet with Curriculum Development & Curriculum Review Committees to review the data and request a new minimum of "B" in RDG-091 & IEL-096 before registering for MRT-110

* Propose a pilot of reduction of class size in the F2F MRT-110 class sections from 32 to 25 for one year to evaluate the difference a smaller learning environment makes for students who state that they prefer contact with their instructor *vs*. in online learning.

Identify Resources to Complete Project "Success in Medical Terminology"

* Explore development and implementation of a 'bridge' course to MRT-110

* Explore engaging an Education Specialist for one of the 'high enrollment' MRT-110 F2F course sections to work with students.

LoShay Willis, Assistant Dean, Career Programs and mentor for this project called a meeting with Michael Morsches, Dean, Learning Enrichment & College Readiness, Rita Kealy, Assistant Professor Phlebotomy & Medical Terminology and myself to discuss the findings of the 5-semester data. At that meeting Michael Morsches acknowledged the clarity of the data, confirmed the need to revisit the prerequisite of a "C" on reading scores and suggested a 'bridge' for those students scoring a "C" on RDG-091 and IEL-096. The 'bridge' was more likened to a form of 'supplemental instruction' (SI) where students would be enrolled in MRT-110 and concurrently enrolled in an additional mandatory instructional course. This pathway was forwarded to Jennifer Davidson for viability. Though plausible, it was deemed problematic to implement. An alternative option surfaced along a similar theme of 'supplemental instruction.' This alternative option included the following:

* raise the prerequisite for reading courses (RDG-091 and IEL-096) for MRT-110 from "C" to "B" * develop an 'Intro to Med Term' course for students who earn a "C" in RDG-091 or IEL-096

Rita Kealy recently developed an introductory medical terminology course and taught it as part of a grant-funded project related to the Lighthouse for the Blind corporation in Chicago. The potential for developing this course further was perfect as a 'bridge' to MRT-110. This revision of a 'bridge' was forwarded to Academic Services for review; it was deemed a more reasonable route to pursue. Consequently, the following documents have been prepared for submission to the May 2019 Curriculum Development meeting; supported by Career Programs dean, assistant dean and department chair with a proposed implementation date of Spring 2020:

- Course Outline MRT-110 (revision of prerequisites)
- Course Revision Form-MRT-110 (revision of prerequisites)
- New Course Development Form-MRT-102 (Intro to Med Term)
- Course Outline MRT-102 (Intro to Med Term)
- Course Syllabus MRT-102 (Intro to Med Term)
- Course Credit Hour Audit Form MRT-102

Follow-up

Over a period of three semesters (SU20, FA20 and SP21) evaluate the results of student performance (i.e. passing the Mid-term exam) of those taking MRT-102, RDG-091 and IEL-096 and compare the pass rate to the data from the five semesters initially reported in this research project (SP18, FA17, SU17, SP17 and FA16).

Intended Outcomes

- Increase in the number of students passing the Mid-term exam
- Reduction in the number of students dropping the course after mid-term
- Enhanced student learning and motivation to succeed
- Increase in the number of students completing the course with a minimum of "C"
- Reduction in the number of students required to repeat the course as a requirement for a program
- Reduction in the number of disillusioned students who are afraid to take MRT-110 again

Additional Option to Explore

As identified earlier in this paper, there is another option to explore in bolstering student success in MRT-110, i.e. reduction of class size in the F2F MRT-110 class sections from 32 to 25 for 1 year to evaluate the difference a smaller learning environment makes for students who state that they prefer contact with their instructor vs. in online learning (please refer to the chart above).

Conclusion

This research project as a function of the MVCC Retention Academy was an opportunity to continue to work with assessment practices in use in MRT-110, Medical Terminology to further student success in Medical Terminology. This project provided the opportunity to delve deeper into issues/problems inhibiting student success. This project was the culmination of identifying 'roadblocks' that we as Med Term faculty knew existed, but, could not discern the reasons why students were still failing the Mid-term and/or Final exams. This project provided the guidelines to further investigate the 'roadblocks.'

Gratitude and Recognition

Many thanks to MVCC Executive Leadership Team, for their promotion of this research project. My gratitude to Drs. Sadya Khan and Kristine Christensen, for this exquisitely designed and orchestrated academy with the ongoing support of my mentor, LoShay Willis, Ed.D, and Scott Friedman, Ph.D. for his encouragement in pursuing this research; and all others who assisted me in 'brainstorming', Michael Morsches for his support and suggestion of a type of 'Supplemental Instruction' and Rita Kealy for her advancement and redesign of an introductory medical terminology course; and in generating the data, Karrie Bieker and Aaron Roe (Institutional Research & Planning) and JoJo Mazanec (Informational Technology); and in the review of the data, Nan Galen, Ph.D; and many thanks to Dean Kiana Battle, Ed.D., Assistant Dean LoShay Willis, Ed.D, Beth Romanzow, Department Chair for their support in developing and approving the documents for the Curriculum Committees and for Jennifer Davidson, Ph.D. for her guidance in the development of these documents. This has become a capstone project for me....one for which I am deeply grateful and proud to be a part of.

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