YEAR-TWO
EVALUATION OF THE
ILLINOIS COLLEGE AND
CAREER READINESS ACT
PILOT SITES

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The Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) was established in 1989 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Our primary mission is to provide research, leadership, and service to community college leaders and assist in improving the quality of education in the Illinois community college system. Projects of this office are supported by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), along with other state, federal, and private and not-for-profit organizations. The contents of our reports, briefs and bi-annual UPDATE newsletters do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of our sponsors or the University of Illinois. Comments or inquiries about our publications are welcome and should be directed to OCCRL@illinois.edu

Recommended citation:

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Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank the students, faculty, staff, and administrators of the pilot sites involved in Illinois’ College and Career Readiness Act for their generous sharing of time and information. Individuals located at John A. Logan College, Moraine Valley Community College, Shawnee Community College, South Suburban College, and Southwestern Illinois College facilitated our site visits, participated in one-on-one and focus group interviews, and invited us into their classrooms for observations. Without their generous support, this evaluation would not have been possible.

Similarly, our evaluation team offers its gratitude to the administrative staff of the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), particularly Elaine Johnson, Brian Durham, Jennifer Timmons, and John Noak. These individuals provided our team with resources and they encouraged us to pursue answers to our many questions.

Last, we thank Linda Iliff and other members of the OCCRL team for their constant assistance, ongoing encouragement, and constructive feedback throughout this project.
Introduction

Despite the growth in college attendance over the last several decades, with current enrollment at an all time high, the percentage of college students receiving college degrees has remained consistent over the past 25 years (Conley, 2005). According to Lederman (2009), the United States is “sliding down the list of countries in the proportion of young adults with college credentials” (p. 1). To address this problem, in July 2009 President Obama unveiled the American Graduation Initiative proposal to provide a 10-year, $12 billion investment in community colleges to boost college enrollment and graduation. An important goal of the new initiative would be to use community colleges to prepare a competent workforce and strengthen the nation’s lagging economy. The President expressed confidence in the contribution community colleges can make to the economy by stating, "We will not fill those jobs, or keep those jobs on our shores, without the training offered by community colleges” (Lothian, 2009, p.1).

One reason college completion is not keeping pace with enrollment is the lack of preparation of students who enter college. Increasingly, students entering college lack the requisite competencies in math, reading and writing to enroll in college-level coursework, requiring that they enroll in remediation programs. ACT (2009) purports less than a quarter of graduating high school seniors are college ready, based on their analysis of ACT test data. This issue of college readiness is especially relevant to community colleges that have an open access mission and account for a significant number of college goers. In 2006-07, approximately 6.2 million or 35% of all U.S. higher education students attended community colleges (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). Attewell, Lavin, Domina, and Levey (2006) found 58% of students attending community colleges take at least one remedial course compared to 31% attending non-selective four-year institutions, 2% attending selective four-year institutions, and less than 1% attending highly selective institutions. With so many students entering college needing remediation and the preponderance of these students attending community colleges, the locus of concern for college readiness focuses on the community college level.

The College and Career Readiness Pilot Act

State legislation was passed in 2007 to fund pilot projects consisting of a community college and partner high schools to support the alignment of secondary curriculum with coursework offered by the community college. The intention Public Act 095-0694, The College and Career Readiness Pilot Act, is to better prepare students to be successful in transitioning from high school to college. Public Act 095-0694 specifies the following rationale for the state statute:

The General Assembly finds that there is a direct and significant link between students being academically prepared for college and success in postsecondary education. Many students enter college unprepared for the academic rigors of college and require noncredit remedial courses to attain skills and knowledge needed for regular, credit coursework. Remediation lengthens time to degree, imposes additional costs on students and colleges, and uses student financial aid for courses that will not count toward a degree. All high school juniors take the Prairie State Achievement Examination, which contains the ACT college assessment exam. ACT test elements and scores can be correlated to specific course placements in community colleges. Customized ACT test results can be used in
The CCR Act seeks to address rising remediation rates among high school graduates who enroll in college and who find they are ineligible to take college credit course work. The Act acknowledges that poorly aligned curriculum between high school and college creates confusion about college expectations, contributing to students’ not understanding what they need to know and be able to do to be successful in college. The Act also points out that the detrimental effect of student enrollment in remedial courses is lengthened time to degree and increased financial loan debt.

According to the grant guidelines developed by the ICCB, recipients of the CCR pilot funds must engage in activities to assist the Board with meeting the five elements of the Act, including the:

1. Diagnosis of college readiness by developing a system to align ACT scores to specific community college courses in developmental and freshman curriculums;
2. Reduction of remediation by decreasing the need for remedial coursework in mathematics, reading, and writing at the college level;
3. Alignment of high school and college curriculums;
4. Provision of resources and academic support to students to enrich the senior year of high school through remedial or advanced coursework and other interventions; and,
5. Development of an appropriate evaluation process to measure the effectiveness of readiness intervention strategies.

The CCR Act comes at a time when state funding is declining but demands on college completion are rising. If the state is going to increase college completion rates, it is vitally important to find ways to prepare students so that they limit or avoid remedial course work in college. Efforts to align curriculum through partnerships between K-12 education and community colleges such as those presented in the CCR Act need to be implemented. Rigorous evaluation is needed to determine the impact of programs such as those supported by the CCR Act on student outcomes, including student transition to the community college.

**Evaluation Goals**

The second year of the evaluation continued to document the evolving partnerships between high schools and community colleges and provide quantitative and qualitative evidence of the college preparatory (remedial) programs and supplemental services implemented in association with the CCR Act. The evaluation used a mixed-method approach to assess college preparatory programs involving five community colleges and their many high school partners. The second year of the evaluation also sought to identify promising practices and develop a model of college and career readiness that could be disseminated and replicated statewide. Results of this evaluation are intended to inform state administrative agencies, members of the Illinois legislature, community
colleges and high schools engaged in project, local practitioners, and other educators and stakeholders interested in improving the college and career readiness.

**Evaluation Questions**

The following questions guided the second year of the evaluation:

- How well do the pilot sites address the five elements of the CCR Act?
- What impact do CCR programs and supplemental services have on students’ readiness for college?
- What implications does the CCR Act and its pilot programs have on state policy on college readiness?
- What promising practices lend themselves to a model or models that could be disseminated and replicated statewide?

This report presents reports of the five pilot sites, which lay the groundwork for the second report that focuses on analysis of the pilot sites according to the five CCR Act goals as well as Conley’s model on college readiness (2007).

**Evaluation Methods**

Five community colleges were involved in the second year of the evaluation: John A. Logan College, Moraine Valley Community College, Shawnee Community College, South Suburban College, and Southwestern Illinois College. Similar to the first year of the project, the state of Illinois distributed grants to these five community colleges and the grant funds were used for a variety of purposes, including the delivery of college preparatory/remedial programs, the hiring of personnel to facilitate college transition, and the purchase of student incentives and classroom equipment. Each pilot site developed interventions to improve students’ college readiness by aligning high school and college curricula and offering remedial programs designed to enhance student preparation for college.

During year two (2008-09) of the CCR pilot program, OCCRL’s evaluation team conducted site visits to all five sites. A number of data collection methods were used in conjunction with the site visits, including interviews and observations; periodic telephone calls and e-mail communications; and a paper-pencil survey of student characteristics, experiences, and perceptions. Specifically, the evaluation team used personal interviews (one-on-one and small group), focus groups with students, and classroom observations to gain an understanding of the programs. Following each site visit, a site reports was produced and shared with local program coordinators, and these individuals were encouraged to share them other stakeholders, as appropriate. Review of the reports provided the means to verify the accuracy of the authors’ interpretation of the qualitative data as well as the utility of the report. These pilot site reports, presented herein, lay the foundation for a second year-two evaluation report that provides cross-site results of the CCR pilot programs based on analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data.
Pilot Site Results

This section presents site visit reports that members of the CCR evaluation team produced after visiting pilot programs during the late spring and summer of 2009. The reports are presented in alphabetical order, according to the name of the community college. They are:

- John A. Logan College
- Moraine Valley Community College
- Shawnee Community College
- South Suburban College
- Southwestern Illinois College

John A. Logan College

Site Logistics

Date: July 23, 2009

Interview Participants:

- John A. Logan College administrators, faculty and staff (Department of Educational Programming, Department of Academic Affairs, Department of Mathematics, Department of English, Department of Institutional Research)
- High school administrators and staff (Carbondale, DuQuoin, and Murphysboro High Schools)
- Students from Carbondale, Carterville, DuQuoin, Murphysboro, and West Frankfort High Schools

Evaluation Team: Lorenzo Baber, Erin Castro, Sadya Khan, and Courtney Sanders

Goals:

1. Facilitate discussions and collaboration amongst district high schools, community members, and the college that pertain to curriculum alignment, college readiness, and college transitions.
2. Address math anxiety and poor study and test-taking skills to provide students with the skills needed to place into a higher level of math upon retaking placement tests (through math interventions and skill-based boot camps).
3. Provide students with resources such as one-on-one tutoring and mentoring, online resources for independent skill-building, and incentives for short- and long-term goal achievement.

High School Involvement:

- Carbondale High School, Carbondale, Illinois
- Carterville High School, Carterville, Illinois
• DuQuoin High School, DuQuoin, Illinois
• Elverado High School, Elverado, Illinois
• Marion High School, Marion, Illinois
• Murphysboro High School, Murphysboro, Illinois
• Frankfort High School, West Frankfort, Illinois

Key Elements of Program:
As part of the CCR program, JALC organized eight main components:
• Parental outreach
• Alliance for College Readiness
• Curriculum alignment meetings
• ASSET testing
• High School spring math workshops
• On-site high school interventions
• JALC summer intervention
• CCR guides

Parental Outreach. JALC held six forums in AY09 at their district high schools and other community locations to inform and gather input from parents about the CCR program.

Alliance for College Readiness. The JALC Alliance for College Readiness (The Alliance) is a partnership between JALC and district high schools to bridge the curriculum gap between high school and college and plan for the CCR program. The CCR program coordinator referred to the Alliance as the “backbone of the project in terms of decision-making.” The Alliance was formed in early 2008 and JALC invited all 11 of its high school districts to participate. High schools involved currently are Carbondale, DuQuoin, Marion, Murphysboro, West Frankfurt, and Elverado. The Alliance takes the form of leaders from JALC presenting college and career readiness project information at district high school board meetings, providing the opportunity to communicate the goals and accomplishments of CCR, to give recognition, and to gather input from district stakeholders. Administrators and faculty members from the high school are part of the Alliance, plus JALC invited local industry leaders to be involved. The CCR program coordinator observed the Alliance received “very useful input” from business leaders in terms of industries that are looking for employees. These results suggest the skills students need to go to college and enter the workforce. The Alliance met twice in 2008 and planned a third meeting in May 2009 that was cancelled due to a severe storm. The group planned to reconvene in September 2009. Additionally, the CCR program coordinator and director at JALC met approximately once a week to discuss the CCR project. Administrators and faculty from JALC and local high schools had 12 CCR meetings during AY09.
**Curriculum Alignment Meetings.** Math and English instructors from participating high schools and JALC were involved in curriculum alignment meetings throughout the year. The math curriculum alignment meetings started in summer 2008, totaling 5-6 meetings in AY09. The meetings did not occur every month, but usually happened when “something needed to get done,” as stated by one of the high school math instructors. A main project completed by the math curriculum alignment group was the compilation of a math curriculum binder in mid January 2009. Instructors worked collaboratively to create a binder that contained the curriculum and lesson plans used during the spring and summer interventions. The binder was subsequently used for all of the various CCR math interventions at JALC. Topics in the binder parallel the “My Foundations Lab” used to teach the math portions of various CCR interventions. The faculty was proud of this accomplishment, commenting that the project was “self-directed”, meaning they decided to create it on their own.

Additionally, the faculty worked with the CCR program coordinator to purchase My Foundations Lab math software to be used in conjunction with the curriculum binder. This math group also helped plan spring workshops (mentioned below). As a consequence of having taken the lead on the math curriculum binder as well as the spring workshops, this math curriculum alignment group played a big role in the CCR project in AY09. As a result of these meetings, Carbondale High School started a “College Algebra Readiness” course for seniors, which is completely funded by the high school. This school is the second high school in the area to design a math readiness course based on involvement in the CCR project, following the lead of Marion High School. As far as aligning curriculum, the math instructors stated that they had not been able to get as much done as they wanted during Fiscal Year 09, but that they thought they were “on the right track.”

The English instructors from JALC and Murphysboro, Carbondale, and DuQuoin High Schools met a total of 4-5 times in AY09. The first few meetings were spent reviewing frameworks used by the high schools and the college, and discussing curriculum gaps. By Spring, the group started discussing curriculum alignment. At these meetings, the English instructors discussed the English portion of the various CCR spring and summer interventions at JALC. As a result of these meetings, one high school instructor redesigned her senior English class so it aligned better with JALC’s English courses.

**ASSET Testing.** JALC conducted ASSET testing for placement and diagnostics at partner high schools for all spring and summer CCR interventions. JALC’s Assessment Center offered ASSET testing to all juniors and seniors at all participating high schools in the fall of 2008 and winter of 2009, testing a total of 758 students. Students that participated in the interventions were also post-tested using the ASSET test. The reason ASSET was chosen for placement and diagnostics is because it is administered through paper/pencil and not all of the high schools have computer/bandwidth capabilities to conduct the online version of the test, called COMPASS.

Gaining access to ACT scores continues to be a challenge for JALC, unless the students are registered to attend the college. According to the CCR program coordinator, high school personnel think that JALC has access to students’ ACT scores, not recognizing this is not the case. In fact, due to past difficulties with obtaining ACT scores, the CCR program coordinator
did not ask the high schools for ACT scores but some ACT scores were shared by the high schools without prompting by JALC.

After ASSET testing was administered to the region’s high school students, JALC identified students for the spring workshops by looking at those who scored below the cut-off scores for college credit-bearing courses. (See Appendix C for cut-off scores and course placement logistics.) The CCR program coordinator delivered results of the tests to each school, and the high school teachers spoke to students individually. One high school, Murphysboro, organized an assembly for students who could benefit from the spring workshops. In addition to identifying students based on ASSET tests scores, high school seniors graduating May 2009 who were registered for Math 052 (Basic Algebra) or Math 062 (Intermediate Algebra) in the fall 2009 were recruited to participate in the spring workshops. ASSET test scores were also used to identify students to be part of the summer interventions.

**High School Spring Math Workshops.** Faculty members from Carbondale, DuQuoin, and Marion High Schools decided to hold a boot camp called “Get Ready for College Math” on five Saturdays in Spring 2009. The target population of juniors and seniors was recruited using flyers, letters to parents, advertisements in the local newspaper and radio, and word of mouth of teachers. This idea came about because the planning team of faculty observed that high school students are busy during the weekdays with regular schoolwork and extra-curricular activities, and so they decided to offer workshops on Saturdays when students could participate without sacrificing other high school activities.

The workshops were held at JALC on February 14, February 28, March 21, April 4, and April 18, 2009, from 10am to 12pm. Faculty members from JALC, Carbondale, and DuQuoin High Schools team-taught the workshops, with multiple instructors present at each Saturday session. The faculty members also met for a 1-hour planning session prior to each workshop to discuss their presentations. Instructors received $40/hour for each Saturday session and also received $30/hour for the 1-hour planning session, which meant they could receive a total of $110.00 per Saturday session.

The CCR program coordinator recruited the high school and college faculty members by sending emails and making phone calls to department heads, and sending e-mails directly to faculty members. Two distinct math levels were addressed at all five of the spring workshops: Math 052, Basic Algebra, and Math 062, Intermediate Algebra. High school students whose ASSET scores placed them below each of these levels, or who would be registered for these courses in the fall as a JALC freshman, attended sessions offering extra help. The students received a $10 gas card for each session they attended (distributed to the student on the day of the workshop), and they received a bookstore gift certificate if they attended all five sessions. One student attended all five sessions and secured the bookstore certificate.
Table 1. Number of Students (Juniors and Seniors) attending Spring Workshops, by High School and Session Date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>DuQuoin</th>
<th>Marion</th>
<th>Carbondale</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty members and administrators from JALC and district high schools were disappointed with attendance at these workshops, considering it low. They attributed low attendance to students’ lack of motivation to attend workshops on Saturdays, concluding students may not understand their importance. One high school instructor remarked that perhaps students who were not attending JALC might have the misconception that the intervention does not apply to them. The CCR program coordinator also observed that transportation might be an explanation for low attendance, noting a teacher from DuQuoin High School brought six students the week she was teaching but the following week, when she did not teach, no DuQuoin students participated. On the positive side, faculty members felt the students who attended were “engaged,” “ready to learn,” and “appreciative” of the opportunity. When asked about what the faculty would do differently next time, they commented that they would look into after-school options, in conjunction with tutoring.

**High School Interventions.**

**Carbondale.** JALC and Carbondale High School (CHS) teamed up to incorporate the CCR program into CHS’s annual Summer Enrichment Program, from June 8 to July 3. This program is offered at CHS every summer and includes a diverse array of classes such as Creative Writing, Web Page Design, and Horticulture. In summer 2009, the CCR class, entitled College and Career Readiness Workshop, was added to the Summer Enrichment Program, Monday through Friday from 1pm to 3pm. Students were recruited through flyers posted around the high school and announcements made to various courses. A flyer stated that the workshop allowed students to, “Review and practice math, English, and reading topics needed for college and get a head start on classes for the next school year.” Students had the option of choosing to work in one discipline or splitting time between math and English/reading. Most students chose math or English/reading, but a few students chose both. All Summer Enrichment program courses were free of charge to CHS students,

A few groups of students were targeted for this CCR class offered as part of the Summer Enrichment Program. The target audience included high school students targeted for CCR
programs and services as well as other students who were part of the yearly Summer Enrichment Program, including students who were using a credit recovery option to receive credit for a failed semester of Algebra II or English. Recent CHS graduates who were planning to attend JALC in the fall and who “show[ed] a deficiency in at least one area” were also targeted. Students enrolled as part of credit recovery were required to attend at least 20 hours of the CCR Workshop and demonstrate improvement based on pre- and post-ASSET test scores. If they were successful at completing the assignments, their failed course was replaced with a grade of a D. Otherwise, attendance at each CCR class was not mandatory. A total of 16 students ranging from 9th grade to recent high school graduates participated, and five received credit recovery. Students were also offered incentives for attendance, partly paid for by the CCR grant.

Four CCHS instructors taught a CCR class, two in math and two in English/reading. Each teacher worked 40 hours in the program, with 20 hours of instruction compensated by the CCR grant and the remaining 20 hours compensated by the CHS summer program. The JALC instructors were also involved as tutors, with their salaries paid by the CCR grant. The high school and college instructors worked on the workshop curricula together, and they used My Foundations Lab for the math and English/reading components.

**DuQuoin.** A summer intervention was held at DuQuoin High School (DHS) from June 15 through June 25 for juniors and seniors. Math and English instructors from both DHS and JALC were involved, and they were paid stipends according to the pay schedule established by JALC. To recruit, DHS faculty who served as CCR program coordinators convened juniors and seniors in May to discuss a summer intervention. The coordinators distributed ASSET scores from the prior fall to students, approaching those who scored below the JALC college cut-off level and who they thought could benefit from the program. Flyers were also placed around the school. For a few weeks following the meeting students who were interested in the intervention placed their names on a signup sheet. The week before the intervention, the main program coordinator called all 37 students who signed up, and of these, 10 attended the intervention at DHS. Two students attended the first two days and did not return, while the other eight attended fairly regularly.

From 9am to 11am, students in DHS’s intervention attended the math session where they reviewed topics in Algebra I. Lunch was served (free to students, paid for by the CCR grant) from 11am to 11:30am, and students attended the English session from 11:30am to 1:30pm. The English session reviewed basic writing and used the “My Foundations Lab”. Throughout the math and English sessions, time was devoted to career exploration and a counselor came in once during the intervention to discuss issues such as time management and prioritizing responsibilities. On the last day of the course, students re-took the ASSET test in English and math, and the instructors discussed results with them immediately after their taking the test. Of the seven students that post-tested on ASSET, six placed into English 101, which is college level. For students who pre-tested in math (not all students had pre-test ASSET scores), all five students placed one level higher than their pre-test score. Door prizes were distributed throughout the intervention, such as DVD players, gas cards, and MP3 players, and these prizes were linked to attendance, task completion, and appropriate classroom behaviors.
**Murphysboro.** The last summer intervention was offered by Murphysboro Community High School (MCHS) from June 15 through July 16. The program was held Monday through Thursday from 9am to 12pm at the elementary school down the road from MCHS, due to construction at the high school. Free breakfast and lunch was provided to all students and compensated by a separate grant. To recruit, the program coordinator at MCHS gathered all the junior’s ASSET scores and marked each student who was below the cut-off score and in need of developmental classes at JALC. These juniors attended an assembly on April 8 and were told about the CCR grant that supported the summer intervention. Additionally, counselors and math instructors met to compile a list of math students who would benefit from the program and who should be contacted by phone. Informational letters were sent home with these students. Math and English instructors from both MCHS and JALC collaborated to teach this intervention, and the CCR grant supported stipends for the instructors based on the established payment schedule.

A total of 11 students participated in the MCHS program, with 4 students attending all 20 sessions. Students spent half of their time in English and half in math, with the exception of two students who were doing credit recovery who stayed in math the entire time. The math portion covered the Math 052 and Math 062 topics and used “My Foundations Lab.” The English portion reviewed writing, and also used “My Foundations Lab.” Students were post-tested with ASSET. Eight students post-tested higher in mathematics and writing, and two post-tested at a higher reading level. A counseling component was offered consisting of counseling students on an individual basis, ranging from 10 to 45 minutes each. A counselor held 4-6 sessions with a student where they completed a 3-page form to “increase self-awareness” and develop emotional intelligence. The students received various incentives, and the program coordinator observed that, “incentives proved to be a very-valuable motivation for students to attend and to stay focused in the program.”

**JALC Summer Intervention.** JALC held a summer intervention called “Smart Move for College Readiness” for a 10-day period from July 20 to July 30 from 9am to 2pm Monday through Friday, with the morning session focused on study strategies, college knowledge, and goal setting, and the afternoon session focused on math (Math 052 and Math 062) and English. Juniors and seniors were targeted for the intervention. The “My Foundations Lab” for math and English were used as well. Lunch was provided and paid for by the CCR grant. Students from Murphysboro, Carterville, DuQuoin, and West Frankfort were targeted and recruited by counselors and through the use of flyers. Students were post-tested with ASSET, and their test results were compared with pre-test scores as a means of determining progress. To recruit, an orientation was held at JALC on July 17, including a campus tour, a presentation on details of the summer program, and administration of a learning style inventory. A total of 21 students attended the orientation, and 28 students attended the first session on July 20. Students were also given door prizes at each of the sessions, such as hats, cups and DVD players, and those who attended all the sessions received a $50 gas card, paid for by the CCR grant. A total of 20 students completed the program and received gas cards.

**CCR Guides.** CCR funds were used to hire CCR Guides in the spring and summer interventions held at JALC. The role of a CCR Guide was to serve as a mentor to students in the program. Students indicated interest in having a CCR Guide by checking a box on the application form. The Guides were recruited through advertisements in local newspapers, e-
mails through the JALC list serve, and word of mouth. The CCR Guides had to submit an application to be considered for the program, and they also had to submit to a criminal background check. According to the CCR program coordinator, the CCR Guides did not need any particular college degree but, as stated in the application form, they were expected to have the following skills: “maturity and personal integrity, caring and personable attitude, enthusiasm, respect for diversity, commitment to achievement and contribution, positive self-esteem, and responsible.” A variety of people served as CCR Guides, including retired superintendents, JALC employees, and students from other colleges, such as Southern Illinois University. JALC held a 2-day training for the CCR Guides before the spring intervention started where presenters discussed communication and confidentiality, and what to expect from juniors and seniors. Guidance counselors conducted part of this training, and various training sessions were held throughout the year where various speakers presented topics such as interpersonal relationships and communication.

The CCR Guides provided information to students about what college is like and answered general questions about college. The Guides were required to contact their students at least once every two weeks, although some contacted them more often using phone, e-mail, or face-to-face meetings. Each Guide had to submit a monthly progress report on interactions with their student. Meetings were held three times throughout the year so the entire group of CCR Guides and their students could get together, with dinner provided through the CCR grant. The Guides were compensated using CCR funds, but not to exceed $500 per semester, depending on how much contact they had with their students. CCR administrators based compensation on the monthly progress reports prepared on the students and the amount of time the CCR Guides spent with them. A total of 13 Guides were assigned to 13 students in AY09, with one Guide per student.

Based on interviews, the Guides enjoyed being part of the program, saying their work was a very worthwhile cause. They discussed their own experiences of being scared of being a college student for the first-time and how they felt good that they could help make the transition to college easier for students in the program. When asked what they would like to see changed, they stated that they would like more sessions with other Guides so they can discuss and compare strategies. They would also like more communication within the program and more “direction” for where they should be headed. Overall, they enjoyed their experience being a CCR Guide, and stated that they would most likely be a part of the program even if they were not compensated.

**Interviews with Instructors**

- High school instructors were recruited by the CCR program coordinator via email. The CCR program coordinator identified part-time or full-time instructors certified in their respective content area with experience teaching the target population of students. The coordinator relied on recommendations from various administrative personnel to recruit instructors and sent emails to area high school math and English instructors. Additional high school instructors were made aware of the CCR program through their respective administrators and through informational flyers placed at high schools by instructors already involved in the program. JALC instructors were recruited for the summer program by the CCR project coordinator via email and face-to-face communications.
• Instructors who taught this summer were compensated for mileage and received $40/hour for each session of instruction and $30 for each planning session. Instructors involved with curriculum alignment were compensated hourly for their involvement in various meetings throughout the semester. Some instructors received incentives to attend meetings throughout the semester.

• Instructors who taught various summer high school interventions were employed by JALC, since JALC was the administrator of CCR funds. The CCR project coordinator contacted the math and English departments at JALC to recruit instructors.

• Classroom pedagogy differed among the various summer interventions offered by JALC. Five instructors were involved in the English component, and four of these were local high school instructors and a JALC instructor. When asked why there were five teachers in the classroom, the high school English instructors said they were able to give students individual attention; they wanted a JALC instructor in the classroom so that students would take the course more seriously. The instructors also commented that they were learning from each other, sharing teaching strategies and ideas with one another. The instructors met for an hour after each class to discuss plans for the next class.

• Three instructors taught in the math component of JALC’s summer intervention, and all three worked for the JALC math department. The math component split time between the computer lab, where students worked on My Foundations Lab software, and a regular classroom where they worked on math problems from the binder created by the faculty math alignment group. Both components allowed instructors to give students individual attention.

• Discussions with a few other instructors involved with the various interventions indicated that they were aware that students in developmental courses may need a slower-paced curriculum. Of the interventions held at the local high schools, instructors were aware that high school students have other demands, such as school activities, sports, and summer employment.

**Interviews with Students**

• Almost half of the student focus group participants were high school graduates (7) and the remainder were preparing for their senior year (8). The students indicated they liked the math and English courses because they provided a “refresher” for them. The students also liked their instructors. When asked, the students said they would recommend the summer program to their friends.

• The students in the math focus group stated that one of the main components they enjoyed about the summer intervention was the individual attention they received from teachers. This attention was in contrast to their high school classes where they did not receive much attention from teachers.

• Two students from the 2008 summer math program stated that they enjoyed the program and would do it again. They were given free math books their freshman year at JALC as a result
of their participation in the summer math program, and they were also invited to monthly
meetings where they learned about time management and study skills. They were given free
“goodie bags” with various items in them, such as coffee mugs, pens, and t-shirts. They were
also given food at these meetings.

Analysis

JALC increased the number and depth of CCR interventions in AY09, also increasing the
number of students enrolled. Compared to AY08 when JALC held a handful of tutoring sessions,
a summer orientation, and a 3-day math intervention, AY09 was substantially more active, with
JALC offering a 2-week intervention at the college, a 5-Saturday math boot camp, as well as
multiple summer interventions at three district high schools. Also, JALC extended CCR
programs to four additional high schools: Carterville, Elverado, Marion, and West Frankfort.
All of these schools were not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in AY09, demonstrating
the CCR program was used to assist partner high schools address concerns with students’
academic achievement.

Goal 1: Diagnose College Readiness. One goal of the CCR Act speaks to “diagnose
college readiness by developing a system to align ACT scores.” JALC used ASSET scores to
diagnose college readiness, due to lack of computer access and technological capabilities at some
district high schools. COMPASS was used to a limited extent, with ASSET being the primary
means of diagnosing college readiness. The CCR program coordinator noted that, due to
difficulty in obtaining ACT scores in the past, JALC had not requested these scores of the high
schools, and this barrier in obtaining ACT scores continued to be a challenge for JALC as well as
other CCR sites in AY09. The CCR program coordinator also indicated a lack of understanding
among some K-12 school administrators about the importance of accessing and sharing test
scores, contributing to the lack of data sharing with the community college.

Goal 2: Reduce Remediation. Another goal of the CCR Act is to “reduce remediation
by decreasing the need for remedial coursework in Math, Reading, and Writing.” JALC’s
interventions addressed math and English, with distinct levels of Math 052 and Math 062
(Beginners and Intermediate Algebra) and a general English offering. The English classes
offered general English skills using the My Foundations Lab software, an approach that was
being re-examined by local officials. The CCR program coordinator stated that, “We kind of put
all of them [students in the English intervention] together and provided information on their
scores, reading and writing to the teachers.” Possibly lessons can be learned from advancements
made in differentiating math during AY09 that can apply to future English offerings. Math
teachers involved with curriculum alignment created a binder with curriculum and worksheets to
be used in the math interventions, and these were useful support materials for guiding
instruction.

Goal 3: Align the Curriculum. Both math and English teachers were involved in
curriculum alignment activities at the secondary and postsecondary levels. The math group was
self-motivated and very involved in the CCR program, introducing the spring workshops and
creating the math binder used in JALC’s CCR interventions. These are positive developments.
However, due to the complexity of measuring curriculum alignment itself, the extent to which curricula are aligned more adequately between high school and college curricula is unknown.

**Goal 4: Provide Resources and Academic Support to Enrich the Senior Year.** One of JALC’s goals was to “provide students with resources such as one-on-one tutoring and mentoring, and online resources for independent skill-building”, which aligns with the goal of enrichment of the senior year. The program coordinator stated that it was important for JALC to “provide college knowledge; to help them [students] explore careers, try to focus on emotional intelligence and developing life skills”, demonstrating an understanding of the importance of college preparation beyond classroom instruction. Almost all of JALC’s interventions had an aspect addressing college knowledge where students could take learning inventories, learn about study skills and time management, and improve their “emotional intelligence.” These skills were not present in all interventions, but they were evident in several. For example, MCHS provided students with multiple sessions with counselors, while the summer intervention at JALC had a morning session devoted to study strategies, college knowledge, and goal setting. More consistency (in content and time) in offering these interventions would seem to be an important goal for the future.

One way JALC worked to provide students with academic support was through the CCR Guides. The idea to have assigned “Guides” for students was a new strategy added in 09, and one of the most unique of the five CCR pilot programs. The Guides felt the opportunity was rewarding, and they enjoyed serving students in this capacity. They requested more time at scheduled sessions with each other where they could discuss strategies and experiences with their students. As this activity proceeds, settling on a consistent term will be important. Sometimes referred to as “Guides,” sometimes “Coaches,” and sometimes “Mentors”, we recommend a standard term be identified and used to communicate the position and reduce confusion and miscommunication.

**Goal 5: Develop an Appropriate Evaluation.** The final goal of the CCR Act is to create an appropriate evaluation process to measure the effectiveness of the interventions. JALC has pre- and post-ASSET testing occurring in math and English in several partner high schools. The CCR program coordinator also distributed surveys at all of the faculty curriculum alignment workshops and meetings. However, in terms of tracking students, the college is not engaging the Institutional Research unit, beyond providing ASSET test scores to the CCR program coordinator. Though not yet begun, the Director to the Vice President of Instruction is working on developing a database of students who enroll in the CCR program and tracking these students in the future. However, personal contact was occurring with students who were enrolled at JALC in the previous summer 2008 intervention through monthly meetings with the CCR project coordinator. The Director to the Vice President of Instruction stated that JALC is compiling a database with students who were part of their interventions in 2008, as well as in 2009. This information is gathered directly from the Developmental Department, by the Associate Dean of Developmental and Educational Planning. JALC is also gathering information requested by the ICCB, but the college does not have all the information requested, so responding to the request has been challenging.
Moraine Valley Community College
Date: June 22, 2009

Interview Participants:

- Moraine Valley Community College administrators, faculty and staff (Department of Enrichment Programs and Services, Department of Math, Department of Developmental Education, Department of Minority Student Achievement)
- High school administrators and staff (Eisenhower, Richards, and Shepard High Schools)
- Recent high school graduates from area high schools (Eisenhower, Richards, Shepard, Argo, Stagg, Sandburg, Andrew, and Oak Lawn)

Evaluation Team: Lorenzo Baber, Erin Castro, Sadya Khan, Courtney Sanders

Goals:

- Expand the CCR program to include at least two additional high schools.
- Expand the offering times of math classes in Math 090, 095 and 098.
- Develop presentations to current juniors to discuss PLAN scores as predictors and motivate students to take more rigorous coursework their senior year.
- Develop presentations to current seniors to discuss ACT scores as predictors of Developmental Math courses and encourage enrollment in Summer Experience Program.
- Continue moving forward with the curriculum alignment team and invite high school math faculty to take COMPASS math section as a point of reference.
- Initiate contact with all ten district high schools for 2010 and introduce CCR grant to all schools not aware of the project.
- Enroll 10% more students into Summer Experience Program than last year.

Key Elements of the Program

- Information sessions for students and parents (Eisenhower High School, Richards High School, Shepard High School)
- College placement testing (Eisenhower High School, Richards High School)
- Summer Experience Program - graduates from the following high schools:
  - Eisenhower High School
  - Richards High School
  - Shepard High School
  - Carl Sandburg High School
  - Andrew High School
  - Argo High School
Information Session for Students and Parents. For this initiative, representatives from MVCC worked with high schools in District 218, Eisenhower, Richards, and Shepard. In February and March of 2009, assemblies were held at each high school for juniors who scored 14-19 on the math section of the ACT PLAN test and seniors who scored 16-19 on the math portion of the ACT. The CCR program coordinator estimated 850 students attended these sessions. In conversations with juniors, administrators explained to students that their current scores would place them in a low level developmental education course at MVCC or at any other postsecondary institution. Administrators spoke in further depth on the levels of math remediation courses at MVCC, making mention of the three levels: Math 090, 095, and 098. One administrator who participated in the information sessions noted that they stressed to students the importance of taking more rigorous courses, particularly math, during the senior year. For seniors, the presentation was similar, with the offer of the Summer Experience Program. The Assistant Dean for New Student Retention at MVCC delivered these presentations.

Following the information session with students, MVCC sent letters to parents of senior students who scored 16-19 on their ACT math sub-score. Dated May 1st, the letter was written in English on one side and Spanish on the other side. The letter invited parents to consider enrolling their student in the Summer Experience Program as a way to enhance “critical” math skills and assist with the transition from high school to a postsecondary institution. MVCC administrators identified parents as key to attracting students to the program. From the administrators’ perspectives, parents tend to see the long-term benefits of participating more clearly than students.

College Placement Testing. Initially, the Summer Experience Program was offered to graduating seniors attending high schools in District 218 – Eisenhower, Richards, and Shepard – who scored within a range of 16-19 on the math section of the ACT. Interested students at Richards and Eisenhower took the COMPASS math placement test at their high school. However, because of technical difficulties, Shepard students could not take the COMPASS test at their school, and had to sit for the test at MVCC or the Education Center at Blue Island. About 75 students took the COMPASS test in spring 2009, accounting for about 10% of approximately 800 students who attended the assemblies based on their ACT scores. All students who took the COMPASS test placed into one of three developmental math courses (Math 090, 095 or 098).

Summer Experience Program.

Recruiting. Similar to 2008, MVCC chose to focus on graduating seniors because administrators felt that juniors were serviced well in District 218. MVCC conducted an inventory of services during 2008 and 2009 to “see where the holes were” at the high schools. MVCC administrators concluded that juniors were exposed to multiple programs, including TRIO programs, and one administrator remarked that “it’s not a group that needs much except to hear what [test scores] really mean.”
Additionally, MVCC remained focused on District 218 schools during the second year of the grant, partly because no District 218 high school made AYP in 2008. An administrator stated that they did not expand the program in the second year because, “We didn’t want to invite [other schools] in without being able to explain to them what the program was, and there was some discussion about whether we wanted to [invite other schools] individually or together.” Therefore, once again in 09 the summer intervention was offered to students at Eisenhower, Richards, and Shepard high schools.

High students who took the COMPASS test and scored into the developmental math courses (Math 090, 095 or 098) were contacted via phone call and letter inviting them to take the developmental course during the summer, along with College 101. In return, students were offered a reduced tuition rate (at least 50%) for enrollment in the summer program. Students were not required to enroll at MVCC in the fall semester. As the letter states, “Our goal is to simply help them [students] move closer to college readiness so they may succeed regardless of what school [college] they attend.” However, about two weeks before the program started, only 15 students were enrolled. An MVCC administrator noted that, in hindsight, the offer of covering half of the tuition costs was not an attractive incentive, particularly given the difficult economic times facing many families. MVCC could not initially commit to full tuition for students for a couple of reasons. First, college administrators believed that student enrollments would increase with the additional time allotted to the program. Second, a portion of the grant money was allocated for salary purposes of program affiliates and therefore unavailable for tuition.

Ultimately, MVCC decided to offer full tuition and free textbooks as part of the program. Using MVCC enrollment rosters, the coordinator of the CCR program contacted recent high school graduates from all identified high schools that had students enrolled in a developmental math course at MVCC, and she offered them 100% tuition and free textbooks. The additional requirement was that students would have to take College 101. Eventually, after enhancing the offer, 51 students signed up and, as of the time of OCCRL’s visit to MVCC, 47 students were participating. The discrepancy in enrollment of students in COL 101 and math occurred because some students dropped almost immediately upon starting the program. In actuality, 44 students attended both COL 101 and developmental math. This strategy expanded student participation beyond graduates of District 218; however, it excluded students who had not signed up for a developmental math course at MVCC (but, perhaps had attended one of the earlier information sessions or received a letter at home) from hearing about the 100% tuition offer. Participants included graduates of Argo, Andrew, Oak Lawn, Sandburg, and Stagg High Schools.

Students were given three choices for scheduling during the nine-week program: morning, early afternoon, or early evening. This schedule flexibility was a change from AY08 based on feedback from prior students who felt the block schedule (8 am to 1 pm) limited their options, including employment. Also, in response to feedback from students who attended the program in 08, MVCC moved away from the cohort model where enrollment in the developmental Math class and College 101 class were limited to students in the program. One administrator provided rationale for this modification, saying “[CCR students] wanted to be more integrated into MVCC and not isolated from the other students.”
**Developmental Math.** As a result of movement away from the cohort model, CCR students were integrated into developmental math courses offered to all MVCC students. Administrators elected not to identify Summer Experience Program students to instructors, and they did not have input on selection of instructors for the courses. One administrator observed, “[They are] with adults, [they are] with what they would be with when they get into a regular course.” This was a significant change from AY08 when instructors teaching the Summer Experience Program were fully aware of the students’ background and also aware that they were recent graduates who were part of a program connected to the CCR Act.

In general, developmental math courses at MVCC are structured to ensure consistency in instruction across sections. Instructors are given guidelines for what should be covered in their various sections, and they are given the opportunity to develop their own policies on makeup work, homework, attendance, and major tests (minimum of four), so Summer Experience Program students may have different experiences in the classroom. Although these classes are not exclusive to the Summer Experience Program, the students are enrolled in developmental math classes that meet on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. Summer session at MVCC is eight weeks, beginning June 8th and ending July 31st. Math classes meet for two hours and thirty-five minutes per day. Ten students took Math 090 (enrolled in 2 different sections); 24 students took Math 095 (enrolled in 5 different sections); and 10 students took Math 098 (enrolled in 3 different sections).

Table 2. Enrollment in Developmental Math Courses by Course-level and Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course-level (Section)</th>
<th>Number of Students Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math 090 (Section 006)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 090 (Section 004)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 095 (Section 012)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 095 (Section 006)</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math 095 (Section 010)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 095 (Section 200)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 095 (Section 004)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 098 (Section 006)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math 098 (Section 010)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 098 (Section 200)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**College 101.** The College (COL) 101 course is a regular course offering and is required for all new students attending MVCC. Therefore, students in the Summer Experience Program were required to take this one-credit course that was provided free of charge, and they were concentrated in three sections that were exclusive to participants in the Program. The course description states that, “This [COL 101] course provides an opportunity to assess your purpose for college, assess your study strategies, set college and career goals, examine your values and decision making skills, and develop an appreciation for diversity.” Additionally, instructors of COL 101 were aware that students were part of a program linked to the CCR grant (i.e., the
Assistant Dean of New Student Retention/Co-Chair of the CCR program at MVCC was one of the instructors. All sections of College 101 met on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays for eight weeks, beginning June 8 and ending July 31. Each COL 101 course met for one hour (all scheduled prior to the math class). A total of 48 students enrolled across three different sections were registered for COL 101.

### Table 3. Enrollment in College 101 by Course-level and Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course-level (Section)</th>
<th>Number of Students Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College 101 (Section 007)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College 101 (Section 009)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College 101 (Section 011)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on student feedback, the one-credit College Success Skills (COS) 100 course that was offered in 2008 was not offered 2009 because students participating in 2008 felt there was too much overlap between COS 100 and COL 101. To replace COS 100, MVCC set up a tutor for students to access outside of class. The developmental math course was noted on the student’s transcripts, allowing them the opportunity to move to the next developmental course (for students Math 090 and Math 095) or a college credit bearing math course (for students in Math 098), depending on their success in the current course. Students could advance based on COMPASS placement exam scores at the end of the summer and/or faculty recommendations. MVCC administrators noted that many students who participated in the Summer Experience Program were confused about the non-college credit bearing nature of developmental courses. They observed that the College found it difficult for potential participants and even currently enrolled participants to understand the nature of pre-college (institutional credit) rather than college credit, regardless of what institution they attended. One administrator noted frustration with seeing students from 2008 who dropped out or declined to participate in the Summer Experience Program who had to take a developmental course in the fall who could have taken the course free of charge the previous summer.

**Curricular Alignment.** To address curriculum alignment, one meeting was held in fall 2008 and another in spring 2009. A third meeting was attempted in late spring, but schedules could not be aligned. Approximately six representatives from MVCC, one representative from Shepard High School, the Director from the district office, one representative from Richards High School, and one representative from Eisenhower High School were involved in each meeting. MVCC representatives included faculty from the developmental education department and the Math department.

The meetings seemed to focus on three areas: 1) Stressing the meaning of ACT scores and COMPASS scores to students and parents; 2) Discussing math courses at MVCC, including aligning courses with high school offerings; and 3) Developing healthy communication between high school faculty and MVCC faculty.
In particular, Eisenhower faculty commented on how discussions about ACT, ACT PLAN, and COMPASS testing were valuable. One participant explained, “It was really eye opening… I took the information that we had at the meeting and shared it with the class… Some of them went and registered for Applied Math… [and] I told them, ‘You can do this class here and not take the 095 class and not get credit for it.’” Eisenhower faculty shared concerns about how the ACT and COMPASS placement test were very different, with one noting, “There was not geometry on [the COMPASS] [and in the] ACT prep, we focus on geometry, whereas on the COMPASS, students may not see it.” During this meeting, Eisenhower faculty suggested that perhaps increased access to the COMPASS practice test would help them prepare students for the college assessments. Faculty at both Eisenhower and MVCC mentioned that one of their main conclusions coming out of their discussion was to encourage students and parents to consider a fourth year of math in high school.

MVCC faculty stressed the importance of discussing expectations for students in math courses at the college, with one instructor observing, “[We focused on] communicating what our classes are, what topics we teach in a particular class and, maybe in a sense, lining up what our classes are with the equivalent high school courses, but not necessarily lining up a dual credit or dual enrollment.” During these meetings, participants discussed the sequence of courses offered at the high school. There was agreement that students should be learning to focus on mathematical concepts, not just mathematical rules, as they are key to being successful in courses at MVCC. They reported consensus on the importance of taking a math course during the senior year to keep concepts fresh in students’ minds. One instructor observed, “We had a lengthy discussion on ideas and possibilities for students who do not take four years of math and the impact that has on students when they come [to MVCC] to take their placement exam.”

MVCC instructors stated that the meetings fostered more open communication between high school faculty and MVCC faculty than what occurred in previous years. One administrator noted that, before the CCR grant, “We had a strong, what we would call student development connection with the high schools… Not so much on the academic side… I would say zero connection with the academic side… in terms of alignment, even in terms of having a line of communication and who we should be talking to at the high schools.” MVCC administrators also stated that they discussed over the last few years the characteristics of a successful developmental education program, and they identified potential issues in their system, which might create barriers for students. Discussions MVCC enhanced discussions with faculty and administrators at Eisenhower. However, one faculty member from MVCC stated that they were not clear on the goals of curriculum alignment meetings and what the group wanted to accomplish. MVCC faculty also stated that more discussion would be necessary because the group did not reach any sort of “conclusion” or “next steps” as far as curriculum alignment. When asked about future participation, the instructor stated that they would continue participating to a certain point, but that it was important to find a direction and to make sure they are not just “meeting for the sake of meeting.” Overall, however, the instructor felt that it was a worthwhile pursuit.

An MVCC faculty member stated that although they thought the meetings were helpful, fixing the problem is beyond the high schools and college because there is no “single cause.” For example, MVCC faces difficulties with students who lack basic knowledge about fractions, and
this is reflected in their COMPASS scores. But learning fractions goes past high school, so fixing these types of issues will take a broader focus than just MVCC and the participating high schools. Another challenge was that it was somewhat of an awkward situation when MVCC was sitting with high school personnel because MVCC personnel did not want it to seem like they were telling high schools what to do. It felt “uncomfortable” and like an “unnaturally adversarial situation” according to one MVCC participant.

**Interviews with Instructors**

A total of four instructors from MVCC were interviewed during the site visit.

- For developmental math courses, since Summer Experience participants attended regularly scheduled courses, the instructors for these courses were a mix of full-time faculty and experienced adjuncts. The CCR coordinator had no control over specific selection of instructors for developmental math courses, as there are departmental regulations on course assignments based on seniority.

- Instructors we interviewed were from a variety of levels, from full-time, tenured status to part-time adjuncts. Instructors seemed to vary in teaching experience as well, with many having taught at the high school and middle school level in previous positions.

- College 101 is a course required at MVCC for all full-time, first-time students. All instructors of College 101 are required to attend a training session prior to teaching their section. The specific instructors for sections offered this summer that were enrolling Summer Experience Program participants are very experienced, often serving as facilitators for training sessions of other instructors. Additionally, some these instructors are MVCC administrators in the Division of Student Development.

- In general, syllabi for the math courses are developed by MVCC’s developmental education department and the math faculty. Instructors are given guidelines for what should be covered in their various sections. One instructor noted that this consistency allows for instructors teaching across the sequence to have an understanding of what previous sections have covered. However, as one instructor noted, if students are coming into a class from institutions other than MVCC (or as new students), it is more difficult to gauge their competencies and skills than if they started at MVCC. The instructors seemed to have little knowledge about the CCR grant, although they seemed aware that some of the students in the class were part of a Summer Experience Program.

- Developmental math instructors are given the opportunity to structure policies on makeup work, homework, attendance, and exact number of major tests (minimum of four).

- In observations of classes and interviews with instructors, a wide variety of pedagogical styles seemed to be used. Some instructors appeared to take a very lecture-style approach without much direct interaction with students. Other instructors took a more participatory approach, including trying to establish a personal connection with students. One instructor
discussed how he/she often goes into what he/she refers to as the “Mom/Dad Talk” mode when interacting with students.

- Syllabi for the College 101 course are developed by the College 101 Advisory Committee. Instructors stressed that College 101 is a participatory class. There is very little lecture, as the goal is for “A lot of dialoging back and forth.” Instructors stress that one of their goals is to promote personal growth among student through strengthening study skills, giving exposure to time management strategies, and emphasizing critical thinking skills. Instructors attempt to achieve these goals through various assignments, including group and individual projects. Instructors also emphasized that they focus on exposing students to the various support systems at MVCC, including academic and career counseling, library services, and financial aid services.

- Student assessment is based on quizzes and participation points, and the final project is a paper about what students learned in the course during the eight weeks and how the information will help them during their postsecondary experience.

- The instructors noted that College 101 is particularly valuable for program participants because they are soon making a transition from high school to college. Because the developmental math courses have a lot of information to cover, “study skills, time management, are not built into [developmental math] courses.” Therefore, instructors suggest, College 101 is a necessary complement to the other course.

**Interviews with Students**

MVCC administrators identified recent high school graduates for the summer component of the CCR program, and they reported that the racial, socioeconomic, and gender demographics of students in the Summer Experience program reflected the larger student community that Moraine Valley serves. Of the 47 students participating in the summer program, 27 were female and 20 were male. Twenty-four students identified as White, 11 Latino/Hispanic, 4 African American, 2 Asian/Pacific Islander; 1 multi-racial, and 5 students elected not to identify racially. Thirty-one of the 47 students graduated from high schools in District 218 (Eisenhower, Richards, and Shepard), 12 from District 230 (Stagg, Sandburg, and Andrews), 1 from District 217 (Argo), 1 from District 229, 1 from Central High School, and 1 from Brother Rice High School.

**Table 4. Program Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number of Students Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American (Black)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/a (Hispanic)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other & 1 \\
Unknown & 5 \\
\hline
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School (District)</th>
<th>Number of Students Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argo High School (District 217)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eisenhower High School (District 218)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richards High School (District 218)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepard High School (District 218)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Lawn High School (District 229)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew High School (District 230)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carl Sandburg High School (District 230)</td>
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<td>Stagg High School (District 230)</td>
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<td>Central High School (District 301)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brother Rice High School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Program Enrollment by High School and District

Focus group participants were chosen from one section of Math 090 and two sections of Math 095. Focus group participants were interviewed in rooms other than their respective classrooms without instructors present, and the interviews lasted approximately 15-20 minutes. The following themes emerged from the interview data:

- Most students heard about the program at their high schools, either from instructors or from program administrators who gave a presentation at their high school. Some students who were planning to attend MVCC in the fall were contacted about participating in the summer program by program administrators. Students also received a handout about the program.

- Students enjoyed the flexible hours of the summer program. The College 101 course and the math courses were offered at different times during the day so it allowed the students to have a choice. Students expressed that the flexible schedule also allowed them to work during the summer.

- Students were enticed to participate in the program because it was free and because books were provided for them. Students also liked being able to get a course that they needed to take out the way during the summer rather than when they start classes in the fall.

- Student participation in the summer program helped them to understand more of what college will be like, including how to study, where to get help if needed, and to take responsibility for their course work.
• Students believed their participation in the summer program would help with their transition to MVCC in the fall or other institutions that they planned to attend. Their experiences allowed them to “get the feeling of what it’s like to be on a college campus” and for some, gave them the feeling they would have a head start when they begin classes at MVCC in the fall.

Analysis

MVCC was selected to participate in the CCR grant based on the “ability of the community college to partner with local high schools to develop college and career readiness strategies and college readiness teams.” In Annual Year (AY)08, MVCC chose to work with high schools from District 218 because of previously established partnerships. In AY09, MVCC initially remained focused on high school seniors from District 218 recognizing Eisenhower, Richard, and Shepard High Schools had a severe need for a CCR initiative. None of these high schools met AYP in 2008, with a high low-income enrollment at each school (54% at Eisenhower, 33% at Richard, 28% at Shepard). However, Argo High School (44.8% low-income enrollment and not meeting AYP in 2008) had a similar profile to the other schools but was not connected with CCR. The OCCRL evaluators were not clear on why MVCC did not to include Argo at the beginning stages of the grant, given the high need. Two additional high schools not meeting AYP, Sandburg and Andrews, had considerably fewer low-income students so their initial exclusion seemed more logical. Given these uncertainties, MVCC should consider criteria for involving high schools, such as a combination of AYP and low-income enrollment to promote inclusiveness and demonstrate commitment to outreach to schools that can benefit.

Goal 1: Diagnose College Readiness. The Summer Experience Program was offered to recent high school graduates (recent seniors) who scored between 16 and 19 on the math section of the ACT. Students in this range were offered the COMPASS math placement test at their high school or at MVCC or the Education Center at Blue Island. Placement in the CCR math developmental curriculum was based on the COMPASS test score.

Goal 2: Reduce Remediation. One of the CCR Acts goals is to “reduce remediation by decreasing the need for remedial coursework in mathematics, reading, and writing…” Currently, MVCC is only focused on math in curricular alignment and the Summer Experience Program. While recognizing that far more students entering MVCC test into developmental math than in developmental English, MVCC’s decision to begin with math makes sense. However, as CCR continues MVCC should consider a remedial intervention in English. One difficulty mentioned by local program staff is the ACT (and other standardized tests) do not provide a specific evaluation of what a student needs in a Developmental English course (reading or writing). Even so, the growing population of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners at MVCC, limiting curricular alignment and remedial programs to math limits CCR from reaching a student population that could benefit.

Goal 3: Align the Curriculum. Though limited to Eisenhower High School, the curricular alignment discussions facilitated by MVCC were well-received by faculty. The meetings were described as having the positive outcome of enhancing communication and
allowing MVCC faculty to better understand the experiences of high school level students. They also provided high school instructors with better understanding postsecondary level expectations. Many of the discussions focused on the role of the ACT test, ACT PLAN, and COMPASS, and these discussions appear to be stimulating future conversations. MVCC personnel are encouraged to extend these conversations to other high schools to reduce remediation for more high school students.

**Goal 4: Provide Resources and Academic Supports to Enrich the Senior Year.** One goal of the CCR legislation is to “provide resources and academic support to students to enrich the senior year of high school [emphasis added] through remedial or advanced coursework and other interventions.” Since MVCC’s Summer Experience Program enrolled students who were high school graduates, the program did not address the goal of enrichment of the senior year. One reason given by local program staff for not targeting high school seniors relates to timing: if ACT scores are used to identify participants, then programs occurring during the summer cannot use ACT to place rising seniors because the scores are not available in time to recruit and enroll the students. Therefore, this program did not offer any aspect of the CCR intervention to enrich the senior year of high school.

**Goal 5: Develop an Appropriate Evaluation.** MVCC was able to respond to the data request from the ICCB, but the site had not followed up students who did not attend MVCC following the CCR program. Also, MVCC was committed to providing data, if adequately supported. The Research and Planning Department was not directly responsible for obtaining student data from the high schools. In addition, MVCC collected surveys from juniors who attended information sessions at Shepard, Richards, and Eisenhower High Schools. Focus groups were conducted as well, and some of these data collection activities appear to follow students who enroll at MVCC to gather information on student plans for college, and what programs and services they think could help them prepare for their future.

In addition, the College established an internal evaluation process for measuring the effectiveness of many of its CCR initiatives, particularly the Summer Experience Program. A quantitative comparison of scores between AY08 and AY09 were useful to program leaders, and the internal evaluation of the Summer Experience Program conducted in AY08 was a strength. Results of AY08 internal evaluation were used to make program changes in AY09, including integrating students into regular sections of developmental math. On the surface, it seemed to program leaders that recent high school graduates who struggle in math would benefit from a cohort model where the instruction is customized to their needs; however, interview data suggested the students felt isolated, leading MVCC program leaders to abandon the cohort for a model that integrates students into remedial courses. Upon delivery in AY09, however, the program leaders concluded the cohort was superior to integrating students into the remedial curriculum, indicating their intention to revert in AY10 to the model used in AY08.
Shawnee Community College

Site Logistics

Date: July 22, 2009

Interview Participants:

- Shawnee Community College administrators, faculty and staff (Department of Instructional Services, Department of Student Services, Department of Alternative Education, Department of Institutional Research, Department of Math, Department of English)
- Administrators and faculty from area high schools (Cairo, Century, Egyptian, Meridian, and Shawnee)
- Seniors and recent high school graduates from area high schools (Cairo, Century, Egyptian, Joppa, and Meridian)

Evaluation Team: Lorenzo Baber, Erin Castro, Sadya Khan, Courtney Sanders

Goals:

1. Involve more “in-need” students in workshops/interventions.
2. Involve more teachers in the CCR program at the four core, partner high schools (Cairo, Century, Egyptian, Meridian)
3. Use the required ASSET or COMPASS as our testing method to include students in interventions.
4. Align curriculum in the areas of math and English.
5. Add schools, as funding allowed, to include more potential students in the CCR program.

Key Elements of the Program

- ACT Prep Classes (Egyptian Senior High School, Meridian High School)
- English Workshops for Instructors at the following high schools:
  - Cairo High School
  - Century High School
  - Egyptian High School
  - Goreville High School
  - Shawnee High School
  - Vienna High School
- Math Enrichment Program for Students (Dongola High School, Meridian Senior High School)
- Summer Enrichment Program
ACT Prep Classes. ACT Prep classes were developed as a result of a need identified by Egyptian and Meridian High Schools, with leaders of these schools contacting the Shawnee to request assistance. The ACT Prep classes were offered free of charge to students at both schools. The instructor for the 6-week course was paid by the CCR grant. Shawnee offered an ACT Test Prep course for seniors who had taken the PSAE (ACT) the previous spring who expressed concern that their scores were lower than expected. These students were identified by an English teacher and offered the chance to retake the ACT in late October 2008. Classes were also offered to seniors at Egyptian High School. The students met two hours twice a week for six weeks. The materials used were “The ACT Video Review Workbook/DVD” by Michael K. Smith, ‘Classroom Jeopardy’ by Classroom Insights, ‘ACT in a Box’ by Kaplan, and ‘Quack – ACT Vocabulary (ACT/SAT)’ by Discovery. Of the 32 students who participated at Egyptian High School, 16 (50%) increased their scores when they were retested on the ACT in late October 2008.

At Meridian High School, ACT Test Prep classes were offered in spring 2009 to juniors, and the students met for three days a week for one week. The Meridian students that attended the ‘ACT Boot Camp’ did so during their spring break, which was just prior to the PSAE administered by the state. All juniors had taken a pre-ACT test through the Cambridge program that the school was using. Those that participated in the boot camp had lower scores on the pre-test and voluntarily chose to attend the camp during their break. The materials used were “The ACT Video Review Workbook/DVD” (Michael K. Smith Ph.D), supplemented by ‘Classroom Jeopardy’ by Classroom Insights, ‘ACT in a Box’ by Kaplan, and ‘Quack – ACT Vocabulary (ACT/SAT)’ by Discovery. Thirteen students participated at Meridian, and five students (38%) increased their scores.

English Workshops for Instructors. Shawnee held two workshops for English instructors in the district in the spring of 2009 (one in March and one in April). The first workshop was “Teaching Modern Language Association (MLA)” and it focused on helping instructors troubleshoot questions and concerns they had regarding MLA. The workshop also
allowed instructors to share and discuss methods to clearly and accurately design and teach MLA
to students in high school and college. The second workshop, “Writing Prompts/Idea Sharing,”
provided an opportunity for instructors to share current, successful writing assignments with
each other, and create new writing assignments. Instructors were encouraged to bring examples
and assignment sheets of ideas they wanted to share. Both workshops were organized by three
Shawnee faculty members. High schools that participated in the workshops included Cairo,
Century, Egyptian, Vienna, Goreville, and Shawnee High Schools. Between the two workshops,
there were nine instructors that attended.

High School Math Enrichment Program for Students. In AY09, math enrichment
programs were offered to all four of the original partner schools (Cairo, Century, Egyptian,
Meridian) and at high schools added in AY09. Dongola and Meridian were the only schools that
had a teacher that either had time to teach (due to many teachers coaching sports teams, driving
school buses, sponsoring clubs, etc.) or were willing to commit to an after-school program.
Students were targeted for the CCR program based on their ASSET or COMPASS scores.
Shawnee has a “placement testing” relationship with the schools in their district, allowing the
college to test students at least one time per school year, sometimes twice. Cut scores on the
ASSET test for math at the developmental level are 33 and below for the numerical test and 38
and below for the intermediate algebra test; math cut scores are 99 for pre-algebra and algebra
respectively on COMPASS. Both schools met two days a week for 2 hours at each meeting. The
instructors used their discretion as to what areas of math to teach based on their knowledge of
their students’ needs and the areas that these students needed improvement.

Meridian High School offered a much more extensive CCR program, holding meetings for 17
weeks from January 12\textsuperscript{th} to May 13\textsuperscript{th}. Ten students, six juniors and four seniors, participated,
and six students (60\%) increased their ASSET scores when retested at the end of the
intervention. Math enrichment classes were offered at Dongola High School in the spring of
2009 for juniors and seniors. Classes at Dongola met for 11 weeks from February 3 to April 23
with 14 students, 12 juniors and 2 seniors, enrolled in the program. These students were pre and
post-tested using COMPASS, and all five students who completed the program increased their
post-test scores.

Summer Enrichment Program.

Recruitment. The Summer Enrichment Program was offered to recent high school
graduates and students entering their senior year of high school at Cairo, Century, Egyptian,
Dongola, Joppa, and Meridian, and Shawnee High Schools. Only Cairo, Century, Egyptian, and
Meridian were the focus in year one of the CCR grant in AY08.

Shawnee used the ASSET test, a paper-pencil test, as its main indicator of progress due to the
fact that most of their district high schools could not accommodate the COMPASS test for a
large number of students at one time. The COMPASS is a computer-based test and many of their
high schools have one or two computers (some none) that are equipped with the program.
Therefore, what takes a class session to test with ASSET can take a couple of weeks for
COMPASS, including pulling students out one or two classes at a time.
The CCR program coordinator mentioned that some of the more motivated students in the district travel to either the main campus or one of Shawnee’s extension centers and are given the COMPASS test for placement purposes. This would be why some students have both ASSET (administered at the high schools each year) and COMPASS scores. The CCR program coordinator mentioned that the high school guidance counselors worked very well with the college to identify students for the program, also using students’ test scores as criteria.

The CCR program coordinator mentioned that they had more time to get the word out about the program in AY09, compared to AY08, because of the late start Shawnee had with implementing the CCR grant in its first year in AY08. In AY09, the coordinator went to the high schools and spoke to juniors and seniors about the Summer Enrichment Program and the courses offered. The coordinator told students how they could save money by taking courses they would need to take once they get to college by taking them free of charge as part of the summer enrollment program. She also attended Parents Nights at Egyptian and Century High Schools and informed parents of the CCR program; plus a letter was sent to students’ homes, addressed to parents. The program coordinator felt these activities had a big impact in AY09. She received phone calls from parents asking questions about the program, and she believed that involving the parents helped motivate some students to take advantage of the summer program.

Shawnee offered full tuition and books, plus a few other incentives, were provided by the CCR grant. Students who completed their courses with a grade of C or above received incentives as well, paid for by the CCR grant.

Two sections of Developmental Math (MAT 041-Introduction to Algebra) and two sections of Developmental Reading/English (ENG 043/044 – Developmental Composition I and II) were offered to the students. There was no overlap of students between the math and English courses. One section of each course was offered at Shawnee’s main campus, while a second section was offered at Shawnee’s Anna Extension Center. A few students who were not part of the CCR program were also enrolled in these courses, but they did not receive the benefits of free tuition or books or the incentives for receiving a grade of C or better.

Students were placed into courses based on ASSET or COMPASS cut-off scores (or ACT scores of 20 or below), as noted below.

**Developmental Math.** Introduction to Algebra (MAT 041) was the developmental math course offered in the Summer Enrichment Program. MAT 041 is the last course in Shawnee’s developmental sequence and is followed by MAT 114 (Intermediate Algebra). At the time of our visit, eight students were enrolled in MAT 041 between two sites (three at the main campus, five at the Anna Extension Center). Both sections met Monday through Thursday from 1:00 to 2:15 pm. According to one administrator, instructors were chosen to teach the course based on their experience and expertise in the subject area.

Students with ASSET scores of 34 or above on the Numerical section were recommended to take Math 041, and students with COMPASS scores of 22-100 on the Pre-Algebra section or 01-45 on the Algebra were also recommended to take the Math 041 course. Most of the math students tested into the Math 041 level, which is why that particular class was offered. There were a very
small number of students that tested at the border line of MAT 114 (Intermediate Algebra), but after talking with our Dean of Advisement, she suggested staying with the 041, because the students were expected to benefit from it.

Eight students completed the Math 041 course in the Summer Enrichment Program. Based on their pre- and post-ASSET scores, 63% of these students increased their post-test scores, 25% decreased in their scores, and 12% had no change.

**Developmental English/Writing.** Developmental Composition I and II (ENG 043/044) was offered to develop students’ reading and writing skills. These two courses are Shawnee’s only developmental writing courses, and they cover a beginning and intermediate level of writing. For the Summer Enrichment Program, these two courses were combined into one so students experienced both levels of the writing courses. An instructor of the English course and several students enrolled in the courses mentioned that they were behind the beginning level of this developmental course. At the time of our visit, 15 students were enrolled in the course offered in two locations: 8 at the main campus, 7 at the Anna Extension Center. The section at the main campus met Monday through Thursday from 1:00 to 2:15 pm, while the section at the Anna Extension Center met Monday and Wednesday from 1:00-3:45 pm. Students were placed into the course based on ASSET or COMPASS cut-off scores (or ACT scores of 20 or below). Students with ASSET scores of 0-40 or COMPASS scores of 1-56 were recommended to take the Developmental Composition I and II courses. Again, instructors were chosen to teach the course based on their expertise in the subject area.

Thirteen students completed the combined Developmental Composition I and II courses in the Summer Enrichment Program. Based on their pre- and post-ASSET scores, 54% of these students increased their post-test scores, 38% decreased their scores, and 8% had no change.

**Curricular Alignment Meetings.** Curricular alignment discussions were held in AY08 and AY09 for math and English, and science was added in AY09. High school instructors who were interviewed said not all high schools were interested in participating, and they attributed this, in part, to resistance from high school administrators. Another reason given was that some teachers are overwhelmed and discouraged by seeing other programs come and go, so they were hesitant to participate in another program. On the positive side, several curriculum meetings were held in AY09 and participating instructors were pleased with the progress of the meetings.

**Math.** Meetings of high school math and Shawnee math faculty were held throughout AY09. Four or five meetings were held, with faculty representatives of Cairo, Century, Egyptian, Meridian, and Shawnee High Schools being present. Approximately seven or eight people attended each meeting (not everyone attended every meeting). At the meetings, the math instructors were able to take the COMPASS test, which gave them further insight into the test as well as necessary preparation for it.

When considering curriculum alignment, some math teachers explained that it was difficult to reach consensus on one plan for math for all high schools because some high schools offer one math sequence for all students. Some instructors started to create a math curriculum rubric throughout all high schools in the Shawnee district from grade 7 to 12 (since some schools house
these grades in one building), but this was difficult because the schools offer math content in
different sequences (e.g., some schools offer Geometry before Algebra II or vice versa).
Although the math rubric was not finished, the math instructors plan to complete it during future
meetings. Despite not reaching consensus, the math instructors thought the alignment meetings
were beneficial. One high school instructor explained, “we are stepping toward what the college
wants… [in AY08] we were doing it [alignment] because we had to do it, now we are doing it
for a reason… for college readiness as opposed to teaching standards. Reasoning is much for us
and for our students…” This instructor mentioned the importance the curriculum alignment
meetings had in allowing instructors to focus on a student-oriented goal rather than teaching to
standards, which would enable them to meet students’ needs more successfully.

**English.** In AY09, an English rubric was created, from which the high schools were
planning to work. Three instructors were instrumental in putting together the rubric that contains
various topics and skills that should be mastered from grade 9 through 12. Three objectives were
established: 1) to provide communication between secondary and postsecondary schools, 2) to
align writing curriculum to better prepare high school students for college-level writing, and 3)
to establish assessment techniques for aligned curriculum. The high school and college English
faculties agreed that students are not prepared when they reach college-level English, and they
lack necessary skills to succeed. They believed that this rubric would help instructors standardize
curriculum offerings so they can better prepare students for college.

**Science.** Administration initially brought in the science faculty at the suggestion of the
math teachers due to the fact that critical thinking/formulas mix math and science. Three science
meetings were held during AY09, along with one math/science meeting. Century, Egyptian,
Meridian, and Dongola High Schools participated in the science alignment meetings. Participants
concluded alignment of science curricula would be difficult due to the fact that in two out of the
four core schools, there is only one science teacher for grades 7–12. Rather than align
curriculum, a notebook/binder consisting of materials from several of the high school faculty and
a Shawnee faculty member was compiled as a way to work more critical thinking exercises into
the high school teacher’s existing lesson plans. The notebook could be used to draw from once or
twice a week, to use at some point during the class period.

As the emphasis of CCR centers on English and math only, the schools have no plans to meet
further. However, many science teachers plan to draw from the notebook in hopes of better
preparing their juniors for the PSAE and their seniors for college placement tests.

**Interviews with Instructors**

Two instructors of the Summer Enrichment Program were interviewed during the site visit about
how they were recruited and their instructional approaches.

- Both instructors (one English, one math) were identified by the CCR program coordinator as
  potential instructors for the course.

- Both instructors had previous experience working in developmental education, although the
  length of the experience varied. One instructor had completed one year as a developmental
education instructor while the other had taught developmental education courses for over 10 years. Both instructors had previous professional connections with Shawnee.

- It appeared the instructors were selected based on a combination of experience, professional connection to the CCR program coordinator, and pedagogical skills.

- The instructors indicated that they had a general understanding about the students enrolled in the summer enrollment program, specifically that students had tested into a developmental level course, but they did not have detailed information.

- One instructor indicated being “shocked” by the skill level of students in the class, indicating the necessity to abandon lesson plans and work with students as best he/she could over the 8-week time period. A second instructor indicated following the prescribed syllabus more closely, but also trying to facilitate an interactive approach in the class. The second instructor observed that the students “are pretty quiet and trying to get them to participate is difficult.”

- Classroom observations by OCCRL staff indicated the instructors seem to have a strong personal relationship with students, answering their specific questions about the subject as well as their general questions about what to expect in the fall when the students enter college.

Interviews with Students

While both juniors and graduated seniors were targeted, juniors enrolled and completed Shawnee’s CCR program. Eight students enrolled in the MAT 0041 classes with six of these students being female. One student was Hispanic, one was African-American, and the remaining six were White. Thirteen students enrolled in ENG 0043 classes. Out of these 13 students, 9 were female. One student was Hispanic, two were African-American, and ten were White.

Focus group participants were chosen from one section of Math 0041 and one section of English 0043/0044. Members of OCCRL’s evaluation team conducted the focus group interviews. Participants were interviewed in their respective classrooms when the instructors were not present, with each interview lasting approximately 15 minutes. The following themes emerged from the interview data:

- Most students heard about the program from the CCR program coordinator at Shawnee who came to their high school or from a guidance counselor at their high school who explained the program and why it might be a good opportunity. Some students (or their parents) also received a letter from Shawnee, which further explained the program, the courses offered and benefits.

- Incentives for students to participate in the program included that it was free tuition (covered by the CCR grant) and that books were provided. Students also liked the idea of getting help with their academic problem areas and getting a course that they could get “out of the way” during the summer rather than waiting until starting college. The students also enjoyed the other rewards such as t-shirts, flash drives, and gift cards.
Participation in the Summer Enrichment Program helped students gain a better understanding of what college will be like, including how to balance their coursework and other activities or jobs, and how to take responsibility for their own academic work since teachers did not always remind them of assignments as happened in high school.

Students in the English course said that they wished the course was longer (e.g. 14 weeks instead of 7). Once they began the class, the students realized that they were very unprepared, and they recognized that their instructor had to spend a lot of time on the basics, which did not allow adequate time to cover some topics in depth.

All the students stated that they already had plans to attend college, and they said participation in the program made them feel more prepared for their future college experiences than they would have felt without it.

Analysis

Goal 1: Diagnose College Readiness. For the summer intervention, while Shawnee has moved from using TABE (which is not a college placement test) to using ASSET and COMPASS scores to identify students, the use of ACT or Pre-ACT scores for these interventions is noticeably absent. This is despite the fact that the Summer Enrichment Program is targeting graduated seniors who likely have taken the ACT at the end of their junior year. One of the stated reasons for using ASSET and COMPASS is that Shawnee can access scores directly, suggesting Shawnee, similar to other community colleges involved in CCR, is having difficulty accessing ACT scores from high schools. The ASSET test is easier to administer because it does not require the use of multiple computers and bandwidth, which is a problem for the geographic area that Shawnee serves. Further, Shawnee has better understanding of students’ competencies, particularly in reading and writing. Ultimately, ASSET or COMPASS is being used because of difficulty with data sharing, a common issue across the CCR sites.

Goal 2: Reduce Remediation. Shawnee offered interventions of varying formats through high school partners and offered by high school instructors. The college’s Summer Enrichment Program was offered in algebra (041) and a combined Developmental English I and II course. A total of 21 juniors participated in and completed the program, with the majority showing academic gains. Though positive, the low enrollment was disappointing for Shawnee administrators who gave considerable attention to recruitment utilizing ASSET and COMPASS cut-off scores and recommendations from guidance counselors to identify potential participants. From the information provided, it is hard to estimate the number of students who were informed about the summer program which relates to the fifth goal of the CCR Act, which is to develop appropriate evaluation measures for the interventions. Shawnee administrators hoped that the extension sites, combined with informal recruitment through word of mouth and formal recruitment by the program administrators, would increase participation in AY10.

Goal 3: Align the Curriculum. Curricular alignment discussions facilitated by Shawnee included both English and Math instructors, aligning with the CCR Act goal of developing conversations that align high school and college curricula. Additionally, Shawnee has included
science as part of the discussions. One high school instructor suggested that involving science is important as it links English with math and moves students from abstract to application.

Shawnee was selected as a pilot site, in part, because of its ability to partner with local high schools. The college has a history of strong connections with high schools in its district, a significant achievement given the large geographic area that is covered. Shawnee has been proactive in taking many initiatives to high schools, utilizing extension centers. During AY09, Shawnee extended its programs and initiatives from four high schools (Egyptian, Meridian, Cairo, Century) to seven high schools (adding Anna-Jonesboro, Shawnee, and Dongola). Furthermore, Shawnee has responded to requests from high schools—for example, the development of the ACT prep course at Egyptian and Meridian at the request of school administrators. Although, high administrator turnover at Cairo High School made communication challenging. Ultimately, the students at Cairo are as well informed of the opportunities that Shawnee is providing with CCR. The College and Career Research Center being established in Cairo (accessible to Meridian as well) will hopefully provide students at Cairo with more exposure to the programs related to the ACT.

**Goal 4: Provide Resources and Academic Supports to Enrich the Senior Year.** For the ACT prep at both Egyptian and Meridian High Schools, Shawnee was able to utilize ACT scores (for seniors) and PSAE (for juniors) to identify students for the initiative. As a result, this initiative connected with the CCR Act goal of providing resources and academic support to students during their senior year. However, benefits were uneven among the schools. Not surprisingly, students appeared to experience greater gains during the six-week program at Egyptian than the three-day boot camp at Meridian. It was unclear whether seniors who attended the ACT prep at Egyptian also participated in the Summer Enrichment Program (or if there are potential participants from the juniors who participated in the boot camp at Meridian). Connecting the ACT prep courses held during the academic year with the interventions occurring during the summer would seem to allow Shawnee to address multiple goals of the CCR Act, and this step is encouraged. No other activities were identified that would extend the summer intervention or provide a means of follow-up or reinforcing learning that took place in the summer.

**Goal 5: Develop an Appropriate Evaluation.** While there was plenty of anecdotal evidence from instructors about the value of the CCR program and curriculum alignment discussions, including considering sustainability, Shawnee should consider developing a more comprehensive evaluation. In addition to evaluating curriculum alignment discussions, it is important for Shawnee to maintain better tracking systems of students entering and completing their programs.
South Suburban College

Site Logistics

Date: June 23, 2009

Interview Participants:

- South Suburban College (SSC) administrators, faculty, staff (Department of Academic Services, Department of Mathematics, Department of English, Department of Counseling, Department of Career Development)
- High school administrators (Thornwood High School)
- High school students participating in CCR program

Evaluation team: Lorenzo Baber, Erin Castro, Sadya Khan, and Courtney Sanders

Goals:

1. Increase the number of participating districts and participating students.
2. Make the program more meaningful by testing students on the first day and then creating courses that address the needs of four cohorts of students.
3. Make the goals of the program more apparent by offering a thorough opening day orientation for the students.
4. Make the program more attractive by offering a work-study option in the afternoons through which students can find part-time employment.
5. Encourage and reward perfect attendance and excellent performance with gift cards at the end of the program.

Key Elements of the Program

- Academic Intervention for Matriculation (AIM) Program:
  - Breman Community High School, Midlothian
  - Thornton Fractional North, Calumet City, Illinois
  - Thornton Fractional South, Lansing, Illinois
  - Thornridge High School, Dolton Illinois
  - Thornton High School, Harvey, Illinois
  - Thornwood High School, South Holland, Illinois

- Curriculum Alignment:
  - Thornridge High School, Dolton, Illinois
  - Thornton High School, Harvey, Illinois
  - Thornwood High School, South Holland, Illinois
Recruitment and Orientation. South Suburban College (SSC) contacted high schools in District 205, 215, and 228 on November 5, 2008 to hold a caucus to plan the AIM program for AY09. All the high schools involved in the AIM program did not make AYP in 2008. Representatives from District 205 and SSC discussed what worked with last year’s AIM program, and what did not work well. Following this meeting, SSC sent letters and made phone calls to superintendents at District 215 and 228 to involve their students. Since District 205 was already on-board for the AIM program from AY08, personnel did not believe it was important to “recruit” this district to participate for AY09. At District 215, the program eventually got passed down to the Dean of Counselors, who had two counselors from the district serve as point people for the project. In January 2009, the CCR team, including 10 faculty and personnel from SSC and five people each from Districts 205 and 215, met again to determine the criteria for students to be targeted for the AIM program offered in summer 2009. District 228 did not send anyone to these meetings. The agreed-upon criteria for students participating in the program from all districts were scores between 13-17 on the Pre-ACT (PACT) exam and current enrollment in Algebra II. SSC gave the high schools in District 205, 215, and 228 this criterion for selecting the students, and the high schools compiled the names and addresses of students who met it.

SSC program administrators, in coordination with local high school administrators from District 205 and 215, mailed out 550 invitations to parents of potential AIM program participants to attend an informational and recruitment meeting. Approximately 65 people, including students and parents, attended this event in March 2009. Participants from District 205 and 215 were evenly distributed, and one student from District 228 attended. During this informational session, program administrators and faculty introduced themselves to students and parents, and they reviewed the elements of the AIM program. SSC staff also discussed what ‘college readiness’ means, reviewed ACT protocol for college admissions, and collected preliminary information about students’ interest in the program. Administrators and counselors from Districts 205 and 215 also gave several presentations in the spring at the designated district high schools to explain the AIM program.

A total of 58 students applied to SSC for the AIM program that began on June 8, 2009. Transportation via bus was provided to students in Districts 205 and 215, with District 215 supplying the transportation again in AY09. Lunch/breakfast was not provided by SSC as part of the program this year, as opposed to AY08. The CCR program coordinator stated that SSC told the high schools that food and transportation were not to be provided by CCR grant funds for the AIM program, for reasons unknown to the CCR program coordinator. However, all necessary academic materials (tote bags, pens, highlighters, notebooks, folders, calculators, dictionaries and academic books) and tuition were provided to students free of charge, through the CCR grant funds.

Table 6. Student Application Totals by High School for AIM Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participating High Schools</th>
<th>Number of Students Who Applied to the AIM Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thornton Fractional North (District 215)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornton Fractional South (District 215)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornton High School (District 205)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornridge High School (District 205)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornwood High School (District 205)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breman Community High School (District 228)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also new to the program in AY09 was a comprehensive first-day orientation for students. Program administrators, faculty and staff used this orientation to explain what students should expect from the program, and they also reviewed expectations for students to complete the program successfully. Students were also tested on orientation day using COMPASS and ALEKS for math placement and diagnostics, respectively, and COMPASS, Townsend and an essay (rubric-graded by three faculty members) for English/reading placement and diagnostics, respectively. A total of 49 students (84% of the total who applied) attended the orientation on June 8, 2009 and took the COMPASS test.

SSC officials also informed students of various student achievement awards that would be given in the AIM program. All students who completed the program would be given a pizza party in the courtyard, an inspirational paperweight, and a certificate of completion. For perfect attendance at Midterm, students would receive a SSC t-shirt. Those students who had perfect attendance on the final day of class would receive a $25 gift card for McDonalds, iTunes, Old Navy, or Best Buy. Finally, SSC held raffles for tickets for the Great America theme park for students who received a final grade of A and for a pair of $25 gift cards for Loews/AMC Theater for students who received a final grade of B.

After test scores were compiled, SSC staff met to decide which courses would best serve the students’ needs, and they decided to offer Math 095 and 100 and English 098 and 101. This strategy of reviewing student test scores and selecting courses based on those scores was conducted in response to student feedback from AY08. The AY08 students indicated that part of the program was too easy, so SSC wanted to be sure to offer students what they needed academically. The program coordinator stated that, “We decided we were going to offer any classes that they [the students] indicated they needed.” After deciding which courses would be offered, the high school student, parents, and counselors collaboratively decided whether the student would take either the English or the math cohort.

**Remedial Classes.** SSC continued the AIM program by again offering an 8-week summer session from June 8 to July 30, 2009 divided into two cohorts: Math and Reading/English. There was no crossover between the cohorts, and each cohort met from 9:15am – 12pm Monday through Thursday. The math classes were Math 095 and Math 100, and the English class was 098. Of those students who took the COMPASS English/reading test, three students placed into English 101, or the first level course of college English, and these students enrolled in the English 101 over the summer, free of charge, paid for by the CCR grant. A total of nine students were enrolled in the English 098/Reading cohort and six remained until the end.
The English/Reading cohort took English 098 Monday through Thursday at 9:15am. English 098 is the second in a series of three developmental English courses at SSC. After the 10 minute break at 10:30am, students took Reading 082 three times a week on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. Reading 082 is the third course in a series of three developmental courses in reading. Once a week on Wednesdays, students had the counseling portion of their CCR program in which various guidance counselors came to the class and conducted career exploration activities with the students and discussed strategies for college success. There were two different instructors for the English and Reading portions of the class. Both syllabi make it clear that students would “fail” or be “dropped” from the course if they have three or more absences. The English syllabus listed course requirements, such as multiple papers, a regular journal, quizzes, and a final examination. The syllabus also stated that, for each writing assignment, “Students must complete correlated readings in the Reading 082 course.” An integrated curriculum strategy was implemented between the English and Reading portions of the class, with assignments that required instruction across the curriculum. A grade of C or above was required to pass the course. The Reading class, per the syllabus, provided practice with reading techniques that were necessary in a college level course. The English/Reading courses offered students a total of three contact hours of developmental credit.

Based on their COMPASS scores, students were placed into Math 095, Elementary Algebra, or Math 100, Intermediate Algebra. Math 095 is fourth in the sequence of five developmental math courses and Math 100 is the fifth and final developmental math course. Each of these math classes met four days a week Monday through Thursday at 9:15am. After the break, these cohorts had the Structured Learning Assistance (SLA), which served like a structured study hall with an instructor present, three days a week Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and the counseling one day a week on Tuesdays. Both math courses offered students a total of four contact hours of developmental credit, with students who missed more than three days being dropped from the class. Both syllabi mention extra assistance for students who needed it. A total of 23 students were enrolled in the Math 095 class, and 14 students were enrolled in the Math 100 class.

As part of the program, students participated in a group counseling session sponsored by SSC one day a week for approximately 60 minutes. In AY08, the counselors met with students twice a week, but in AY09, the counseling department had staffing issues and did not have full-time counselors to cover two days a week. These group sessions were conducted by a different guidance counselor at each session and allowed students to discuss their future college and career aspirations. Students were given interest tests as well as personality tests like the Myers-Briggs test. Counselors also talked to the students about motivation, college success, and the college search process. SSC program administrators viewed this as an important program component, stating that they wanted students to know what kind of “learning they learn best with.” The structured learning assistance (SLA) component that allowed for a tutor to be present in each math class was offered as part of the CCR program again this year. Students in the math cohort participated in SLA three times a week for one hour. The SLA was structured like a study hall with an instructor/assistant in the class to answer student’s questions and assist them with their math homework.
Work Study. A new component to the AIM program was a work-study employment opportunity for students. In response to student feedback collected in 2008, SSC wanted to give students an employment opportunity as part of their commitment to the summer program. SSC originally looked for jobs for the students in the local community but decided to employ the students through the college instead. The work-study coordinator was contacted in the spring about the idea of adding a work-study component. The idea took root quickly, taking only about three months to implement, from initially contacting SSC departments to having students placed in the work-study positions. The work-study coordinator contacted different departments in the college and explained the purpose of the project to them. She indicated that the participating departments were “more than happy” to help by providing work-study jobs. An official letter went out to students and their parents, and high school counselors distributed work-study applications at the information night.

The work-study coordinator used the applications to try to match up students’ backgrounds to try to place them in a work setting. For example, if students knew Spanish, the work-study coordinator tried to place them in an area where they could interact with English as a Second Language (ESL) students, such as the new student center at SSC. If students had allergies, they were refrained from working in an outdoor facility. In general, however, students did not have the option of choosing where they would work because the work-study coordinator’s experience led him/her to believe placement was the most effective option.

From 12:30pm to 3:30pm, Monday through Thursday, student participants worked at various locations throughout the college, such as the physical plant, copy center, career center and the library. This opportunity was given to students on a first-come, first-serve basis and was extended to the first 30 students. There was no interview process, but students did attend an orientation where the work-study coordinator and counselor shared information about where students would be working, how to fill out their timesheets, where to go to receive their paychecks, and what to expect when working at SSC. In 2009 the CCR grant paid for student salaries, but in 2010 this money will come from the general operating budget. At the time of OCCRL’s visit, the work-study coordinator stated that all the departments were pleased with the students, and no complaints were received. The work-study coordinator also commented on many of the students not having worked before and the value of their getting used to understanding what is required of them, such as being on time, dressing properly, and learning what it is like to work at a higher education institution.

Curriculum Alignment. Overall, SSC relied on “informal conversations” between high school and SSC faculty about curriculum alignment. The CCR program coordinator stated that the math objectives of District 205 and SSC were very similar, and the curricula at the two levels were perceived to be aligned fairly well. District 205 offers the same curriculum in all three high schools, and the district had made several changes in the past 4-5 years that it had communicated with SSC, such as strategies for placing freshman.

One issue SSC wants to focus on in 2010 is the use of calculators. SSC noticed that District 205 allows students to use calculators from freshman through senior years. At SSC, students are not allowed to use calculators until Math 095, and even then only half the instructors allow
calculators. SSC hopes to discuss the issue of calculators with District 205 in fall of 2009 and continue into 2010.

Interviews of Instructors

- Program instructors were recruited by the CCR program coordinator in conjunction with other departmental leaders. SSC program staff wanted to recruit instructors who consistently received high student evaluations because they wanted students to be able to connect with faculty. The CCR program coordinator also looked for instructors with developmental experience, and she sought instructors who could be “good classroom managers,” with lots of patience.

- The CCR program coordinator was conscious of gender when pairing the math instructors with the SLAs, matching female instructors with male instructors. She said she purposely did this so students would have instructors of both genders and feel comfortable with one or the other.

- All four AIM program instructors had previous experience teaching in their respective content areas. Some knew one another, which made it easier to coordinate classroom activities and align syllabi. Two of the instructors commented that working with full-time faculty, as opposed to part-time faculty, helped them in communicating about students in the AIM program.

- In terms of classroom pedagogy, the English/reading instructors conducted their classes so students would work on various assignments, allowing them to work with students individually. One instructor made phone calls to the parents of students who did not show up to class or were struggling. And, although it was “strange” for the instructor to do this, s/he realized and took into consideration that the AIM students were high school students and not college students. Two students who exited the English/reading cohort were called at their homes by an AIM program instructor to find out their reasons for leaving the program. This was not something the instructor was advised to do by SSC officials or the CCR program coordinator, but rather something s/he wanted to do.

- Three students who exited the Math portion of the program, by the time of our visit on June 23, 2009, had not been contacted by the AIM instructors or by the CCR program coordinator. The CCR program coordinator stated that she planned to send letters to those students in the following week advising them of their delinquent status.

- One math instructor was very enthusiastic and offered hands-on instruction with students during observations by our OCCRL team members. The instructor engaged the students by calling on various students to work out homework problems on the board and asking them to comment on each other’s work. The instructor praised students when they did a good job with their homework and when their work was neat. The instructor also went around to each student’s desk giving individual attention.

Interviews with Students
SSC worked with high school counselors to recruit qualified students for the AIM program. Eligible students were chosen by individual high schools based on criteria given by SSC. SSC wanted to target juniors with PACT scores between 13 and 17 and currently enrolled in Algebra II and communicated this desire to participating high schools. High schools, then, were given a roster from the CCR program coordinator along with information packets for students who showed an interest in the program.

The number of student participants by course follows (as of the time of the OCCLR site visit):

- English 098: 9 students
- English 101: 3 students
- Mat 095: 23 students
- Math 100: 14 students

OCCRL staff conducted focus group interviews with participants chosen from the English/reading and math cohorts. OCCRL staff also conducted classroom observations to document classroom dynamics. Focus group participants were interviewed either in the classroom or in another room without the instructor, with these group interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes. Several themes emerged from the focus group discussions:

- Most students were recruited by their high school counselors, and a few students were contacted by SCC counselors. Whether they were recruited by their high schools counselors or by SCC counselors largely depended on which high schools the students attended. Some high schools had counselors who were committed to the program, and others did not.

- When asked if they enjoyed the AIM program, most students stated that they liked the program saying it was “fun,” and it “went by fast.” Students suggested that their instructors assigned in-class writing activities, and that they preferred a classroom environment that was not “structured.” Three of the five students in the English/reading focus group said that English was the only area that they needed help in and that they excelled in every other academic subject. When asked if this program was helping to improve their English skills, all five students said yes.

- Some students in the Math 100 cohort stated that they liked their math class and math instructor.

- Some students did not like the SLA component and felt that it was “boring”, and just like a study hall.

- When asked how the AIM program could be improved, students said they would like more one-on-one time with counselors to discuss future plans and college endeavors. They also wanted food free-of-charge, preferably lunch. They commented that they were provided food at the orientation and were under the impression that they would be given snacks (although the CCR program coordinator stated that food was never promised or even
intimated). Students also commented that the SLA component of the program should be optional where students who need and want extra help stay while others leave.

- During our visit, students had only experienced the counseling component of the AIM program two or three times, so it was difficult for them to comment on their satisfaction. However, some students said they liked the class so far because they learned things about themselves. Other students felt that the counseling was beginning to get repetitive.

- Students also liked the work-study element, and most liked where they worked on campus. Two students in the English/reading cohort did not like their jobs and would have preferred to work elsewhere on campus. When asked if the work-study option influenced their desires to participate in the AIM program, a majority of the students in both cohorts said yes, that it heavily influenced their motivation to take the program. Some students remarked that the opportunity to work on campus was the main reason they chose to participate. One student in English/reading also worked outside of the AIM program up to 20 additional hours a week.

- In addition to learning about college requirements, some students wanted to learn more about scholarships, and they wanted more opportunities to talk to counselors and faculty members about their chosen career path.

Analysis

SSC increased the number of partner high schools participating in the CCR program in AY09 from AY08 to include Thornton Fractional North and Thornton Fractional South from District 215 and Bremen Community High School from District 228, for a total of six partner high schools. One of the criterion for SSC being selected as a pilot site was the diverse demographics of the districts that SSC serves. SSC seems to have done a very good job of partnering with schools with a diverse student body make-up, including but not limited to socio-economic status, racial and ethnic diversity, and AYP status. All the schools that SSC chose to work in AY09 did not make AYP and three of the schools have a low-income population of over 50% (Thornton Fractional North at 51%, Thornton at 82%, and Thornwood at 53%). Further, four of the six high schools involved in the CCR program enroll over 94% students of color (Thorndike, 99.9%; Thornton 99.8%; Thornwood, 98.2% and; Thornton Fractional North 94.6%)1

**Goal 1: Diagnose College Readiness.** One of the goals of the CCR Act is to diagnose college readiness by “developing a system to align ACT scores.” SSC planned to target students who scored between a 13 and 17 on the Pre-ACT by relying on high schools to identify students within this range and then referring them to the AIM informational night. SSC was unable to access ACT scores for potential program participants and administrators remarked that having this information would not only give them more insight about student progress, but ensure that partner high schools were recommending appropriate students for the AIM program.

**Goal 2: Reduce Remediation.** Another goal of the CCR Act is to “reduce remediation by decreasing the need for remedial coursework in mathematics, reading, and writing” and

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1 These data were retrieved online from the Interactive Illinois report card, a joint project between Northern Illinois University and the Illinois State Board of Education, August 6, 2009 from: http://iirc.niu.edu
SSC’s AIM program addresses all three of these components. Based on diagnostic testing the first day of the program, and through collaborative discussions between counselors, parents, and teachers, students are placed in either a math or English cohort. However, with the AIM program model, students could only be remediated in either math or English and not for both. SSC also offered Math 095 and 100 and English 098 and 101, based on their review of student test scores, making sure they offered students what they academically needed. Measuring the efficacy of these programs, by tracking what courses student take after the AIM program, will illuminate whether the AIM program is indeed reducing remediation.

**Goal 3: Align Curriculum.** Curricular alignment was not among the key components of SSC’s CCR endeavors in AY09. The absence of structured curriculum alignment efforts was a finding in AY08 as no formal curricular alignment meetings occurred in AY08 or AY09. While the CCR program coordinator stated that District 205 has the same curriculum at all their high schools, the other districts are not being approached for curriculum alignment purposes. Although the instructors involved in the AIM program shared syllabi with one another and talked weekly about curriculum and student progress, opening this dialogue to high school partners is an important aspect of the CCR grant in order to bridge the curriculum gap between high school and college.

**Goal 4: Provide Resources and Academic Supports to Enrich the Senior year.** SSC offered AIM program to high school juniors between grade 11 and 12. Included in AY09 was a work-study component to respond to student-need assessments last year. SSC believed that one of the reasons students did not participate in the summer program last year was because they had obligatory employment responsibilities. In response, SSC designed a work-study option for 30 students on a first-come, first-serve basis. There is no evidence, however, that the AIM program extends into the senior year with educational activities that extend or follow-up on the summer program.

**Goal 5: Develop an Appropriate Evaluation.** One of the goals of the CCR Act is to “develop an appropriate evaluation process to measure the effectiveness of readiness intervention strategies.” SSC has plans to track the AY09 cohort of students and has plans in place to track students from AY08, but the specifics of this plan are unclear. SSC tested students on the first day of the summer program using COMPASS for the math and reading/English component of the program. SSC plans to measure the efficacy of the AIM Program by post-testing students in Math using ALEKS and English using Townsend. Additional tools to measure the outcomes of the curricular alignment meetings would be useful to evaluate what kinds of benefits instructors involved with this component are experiencing. Further, it will help in terms of sustainability so that SSC can justify funding these kinds of interactions among instructors.

SSC is currently using a combination of software programs to track students and is hoping to have a more contemporary system in place by the end of 2010. The IR department is working with the Institutional Technology (IT) department to produce the data files requested by the ICCB. The IR department has the ability to identify specific cohorts of students on their academic (math, writing, etc.) performance. Follow-up of students depends on whether the college has accurate mailing information.
Southwestern Illinois College

Site Logistics

Date: May 11 and 12, 2009

Sites Visited:

- Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC), Belleville and Red Bud Campuses
- East St. Louis Community College Center (ESLCCC)
- Collinsville High School
- Red Bud High School

Interview Participants:

- Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC) administrators, faculty and staff (Department of Academic Affairs, Department of Institutional Research, Department of Mathematics, Department of English, Department of Counseling)
- High school administrators, counselors, and teachers from Cahokia, Collinsville, Steeleville, East St. Louis, SIUE East St. Louis Charter school, Red Bud, Sparta, Highland, Belleville West, and Dupo High Schools
- High School students from Collinsville HS, East St. Louis HS, SIUE East St. Louis Charter HS

Evaluation team: Lorenzo Baber, Debra Bragg, Erin Castro, and Sadya Khan

Goals:

The CCR project goals for SWIC in AY09 were to partner with district high schools to develop, pilot, and evaluate programs that will:

1. Reduce the need for remediation for students as they transition from high school to postsecondary education.
2. Foster communication between high school and college personnel regarding expectations and curriculum alignment.
3. Encourage students to better prepare themselves for postsecondary education.

Key Program Components

- College Success Initiative:
  - Belleville West High School
  - Cahokia High School
  - Collinsville High School
  - SIUE East St. Louis Charter School
  - East St. Louis High School
• **Student Workshops:**
  - Cahokia High School
  - SIUE East St. Louis Charter School
  - East St. Louis High School

• **High School Writing Project – Faculty and English Chairs Meetings:**
  - Althoff High School (English Chairs)
  - Belleville East High School (Faculty and English Chairs)
  - Belleville West High School (Faculty and English Chairs)
  - Dupo High School (English Chairs)
  - East St. Louis High School (English Chairs)
  - Freeburg High School (English Chairs)
  - Highland High School (Faculty and English Chairs)
  - O’Fallon High School (Faculty and English Chairs)
  - Red Bud High School (Faculty and English Chairs)
  - Sparta High School (Faculty)
  - Steeleville High School (Faculty)
  - Triad High School (Faculty)
  - Valmeyer High School (Faculty)

• **High School Writing Project - Writing Ambassador Program:**
  - Collinsville High School
  - Valmeyer High School

• **High School Math Project – Faculty, Math Chairs, and Counselors Meetings:**
  - Althoff High School (Faculty and Math Chairs)
  - Belleville West High School (Faculty and Counselors)
  - Collinsville High School (Math Chairs and Counselors)
  - Columbia High School (Faculty and Math Chairs)
  - Dupo High School (Faculty and Math Chairs)
  - Freeburg High School (Math Chairs)
  - Gibault High School (Faculty and Math Chairs)
  - Granite City High School (Faculty and Math Chairs)
  - Lebanon High School (Math Chairs and Counselors)
  - Marissa High School (Counselors)
- Mascoutah High School (Math Chairs and Counselors)
- O’Fallon High School (Faculty and Math Chairs)
- Okawville High School (Math Chairs)
- Red Bud High School (Math Chairs and Counselors)

**High School Math Project- Junior COMPASS Testing:**
- Collinsville High School
- Dupo High School
- Highland High School
- Red Bud High School
- Sparta High School

**High School Math Project - Senior Math Project (Waterloo High School)**

**Faculty Workshops (Math and English):**
- Althoff High School (Math and English)
- Belleville East High School (Math and English)
- Belleville West High School (English)
- Cahokia High School (Math)
- Collinsville High School (Math and English)
- Coulterville High School (Math)
- Dupo High School (Math and English)
- East St. Louis High School (Math and English)
- Freeburg High School (Math and English)
- Gibault High School (Math)
- Granite City High School (Math)
- Highland High School (Math)
- Lebanon High School (Math)
- Madison High School (Math)
- Mascoutah High School (Math)
- New Athens High School (Math)
- O’Fallon High School (Math and English)
- Okawville High School (Math and English)
- Red Bud High School (Math and English)
- Triad High School (Math and English)
Four initiatives were supported by the CCR grant, with each having multiple projects. The College Success Initiative (CSI) included dual enrollment classes and student workshops; the High School Writing Project consisted of a series of faculty meetings, English Chair meetings, and the Writing Ambassador Program; The High School Math Project included faculty meetings, Math Chair meetings and Counselor Meetings, Junior COMPASS Testing, and a Senior Math Project with one high school; and Faculty workshops were held for English and math. Of these projects, the Writing Ambassador Program, Senior Math Project, Math Chair meetings, and English Chair meetings were completely new programs; the other programs were altered and expanded in AY09. SWIC has multiple campuses in Belleville, Granite City, and Red Bud and shares a facility with various other organizations and colleges in East St. Louis at the East St. Louis Community College Center (ESLCCC). Twenty-seven high schools were involved in various aspects of the project at SWIC in AY09 with many high schools continuing from AY08.

**College Success Initiative (CSI).** The CSI Program at SWIC continued from AY09 with a few major changes. First, SWIC expanded the project to include more high schools. AY08 included students from East St. Louis High School and Cahokia High School, and AY09 included students from Collinsville High School, Belleville West High School, Cahokia High School, East St. Louis High School and the SIUE East St. Louis Charter School. The CSI program was scheduled differently from AY08 where students were simultaneously enrolled in Math 094 and Freshman Seminar. In AY09, at one site the classes were offered separately and students were not required to enroll in both classes. The students at the other two newly added sites did not include the opportunity to enroll in Freshman Seminar. Another change to the schedule this year was the addition of Math 097, along with Math 094. Additionally, while AY08 CSI program was held during the spring semester, in AY09 the various classes were interspersed throughout fall, spring and summer semesters. One reason for this change, according to the coordinator of the CCR program, was because the coordinator was not sure if some students already took one of the courses previously, and she did not want students to repeat a course if it was in the same program. Bus schedules and longer school days at several of the high schools also impacted when classes were offered.

Student recruitment for the ESLCCC program was done through personal visits by a team from SWIC, including admissions and counseling personnel and administrators. Ninety-two students were COMPASS tested late in the spring 2008 semester. SWIC sent letters to those who qualified for courses in the late spring and also hosted a parent orientation night at the ESLCCC in the fall to inform students and parents about the CSI program. An attempt was made in the fall semester to offer a reading course and a writing course, but an insufficient number of students placed at the specified levels. The Freshman Seminar course was offered in the fall semester. In December, students who placed at the Basic Algebra level Math 094 were encouraged to enroll in a spring course.

At Collinsville High School all seniors with ACT math sub-scores between 16 and 20 were initially screened by high school administrators and math faculty in November 2008. Approximately 120 students were then invited to a meeting during the school day where they
could learn about the opportunity to take the COMPASS assessment and possibly qualify for a free developmental class that would provide college readiness skills. A Collinsville High School administrator and the CCR program coordinator explained the goals of the program and answered student questions. In some cases when ACT scores were not available, COMPASS test scores were used to place students. Fifty-five students chose to take the COMPASS test offered to them at their high school on December 5, and 25 of these students registered for Math 094-Basic Algebra, and six registered for Math 097-Intermediate Algebra.

Students from Belleville West High School who had an ACT math sub-score between 16 and 20 were identified by their counselors and math faculty, then invited to travel by bus with a counselor to the Belleville Campus of SWIC to take COMPASS on April 22 or 23. Fifty-one students took advantage of the opportunity to the COMPASS test, learned about services at the college, met briefly with a counselor to learn about their placement, and took a short tour of the campus. An admissions counselor worked with their high school counselors to register those who placed into Math 094 or Math 097 and wished to enroll in a summer class specifically for this group of students on the Belleville Campus. Nine enrolled in the Math 094 class and 7 enrolled in the Math 097 class.

The CCR Program Coordinator, who also serves as the Dean of Math and Sciences at the college, decided on the 16-20 range, primarily because “22” is known as the “college ready” number at this community college, and she wanted to choose a cut-off a little below that level.

There are a couple reasons why Math 094 and Math 097, specifically, were offered as part of the CSI program. One reason was that many incoming students at SWIC were placing into Math 094 (Basic Algebra), as well as Math 097 (Intermediate Algebra). There were about 65 sections of Math 094, as well as 30 sections for Math 097 scheduled in the fall semester at SWIC. Math 094 is also the terminal math course for students going into many allied health and occupational programs. Math 094 and Math 097 are the second and fourth classes out of the four developmental math classes at SWIC.

In addition to the math knowledge presented in these courses, the students were given four “success strategy sheets” for their instructors to review with them on four occasions throughout the semester. The sheets covered topics about study strategies, time management, and learning style preferences. The Math 097 instructors were paid extra to be in the classroom for 30 minutes before each class period to give students additional opportunities to ask questions and seek assistance as needed with course work. All students enrolled in the math classes were also required to sign a contract indicating their acknowledgment of responsibilities in the CSI program. SWIC used part of the CCR grant money to provide stipends for students at ESLCCC who successfully completed the courses with a C or better. Students at the Collinsville location were not offered stipends, though to encourage class attendance drawings for gift cards were conducted periodically throughout the semester. Students received dual enrollment credit for completing courses in the CSI program with a C or above. If students did not successfully complete a course, they received a “W” in their transcripts, with the CCR program coordinator suggesting to instructors to withdraw students who were not attending or passing.

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In the fall of 2008, the Freshman Seminar (Ed 101) was offered at ESLCCC. Students from Cahokia High School, East St. Louis High School and East St. Louis Charter High School who had taken COMPASS in the late spring were invited to participate in this course. It was held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30pm to 4pm and was held September 9, 2008 to December 18, 2008. A total of 21 students enrolled in the course. All 21 students completed, with 2 students receiving an A, 12 students receiving a B, and 7 students receiving a C. In the fall semester, students also had the opportunity to attend a “Learning Enrichment” Drop-In Program. This was held Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30-4pm and provided students with the opportunity to drop in to do their homework or work on English and math with assistance from a SWIC faculty member. For their participation in the Freshman Seminar course students earned a $100 stipend. Those who participated in the Learning Enrichment program for 20 or more hours could earn a $100 stipend, and those who spent at least 10 hours working with the faculty tutor could earn $50. A total of 21 students were paid $100 stipends for their completion of the Freshman Seminar course. No students completed 10 or more hours of work with the faculty tutor in the Learning Enrichment Program.

In the spring of 2009, a total of 18 students enrolled in the Math 094 course at ESLCCC and 2 students completed the course with a C or better. Course fees and books were paid for by the CCR grant and students could earn $100 stipends for completing the course with a C or above. There were also monthly drawings for attendance prizes. Students were aware ahead of time of when the drawings would take place and the prizes for the drawings. The classes at the ESLCCC were held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:45 to 4:55pm.

Both Math 094 and Math 097 were available to students who qualified from Collinsville High School. Students enrolled in Math 094 at the Collinsville site attended the class Mondays and Wednesdays from 6 to 8:10pm. A total of 25 students enrolled in Math 094, with 18 students taking the final exam and 14 students completing the course with a C or better. Math 097 at Collinsville was held Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6 to 8:25pm. A total of six students enrolled in Math 097, with four students completing the course with a C or better. The Math 097 students were not enrolled in a cohort class, since there were not enough students to hold a special class for them. They were combined with seven other SWIC students who chose to enroll at the Collinsville High School extension site. The students at the Collinsville site were not eligible for stipends upon completion of the course, but students in the Math 094 were eligible for monthly attendance prizes through periodic in-class drawings. Students in the Math 097 were not eligible for these attendance prizes, but were eligible for the SWIC ID/MetroLink pass available to all SWIC students. Students in Math 097 were also offered extra assistance before class at 5:30pm from the instructor.

A group of students from Belleville West were COMPASS tested by SWIC in spring 2009 to enroll in summer cohorts of Math 094 and Math 097 to be held at the Belleville Campus of SWIC. An addition to the contract that students must sign for this course is the statement that “…instructors have the option to drop students after they have missed more than four hours of scheduled class time.” This was added because a number of students in one of the spring cohorts did not take class attendance seriously. Students enrolled at the Belleville Campus courses in the summer semester participated in drawings for attendance and received incentives for successful completion at the end of the course. A total of 9 students enrolled in Math 094, and 4 students
completed the course with a C or better. A total of 7 students enrolled in Math 097, and 5 students completed the course with a C or better.

**Student Workshops.** The student workshops that took place at ESLCCC in AY08 continued in AY09. These workshops were aimed at students who placed above or below the requirements to place into Math 094 or Math 097, as well as those who did not choose to enroll in the CSI program. The workshops were offered at the ESLCCC and were open to high school students at Cahokia High School, East St. Louis High School, and SIUE East St. Louis Charter School. At the time of our visit, three out of the four planned workshops had taken place. The fourth workshop was cancelled due to scheduling problems. At the second workshop in February, 22 students attended. The title of this workshop was “Choices in College”. At the most recent workshop in April, 6 students attended. According to the CCR program coordinator, there was very little overlap in students who attended the workshops, so the same topics were presented at each one.

A counselor for SWIC at ESLCCC led the planning and implementation of the student workshops in AY09. The counselor was a part of the committee that developed the student workshops in AY08, but took more of a leadership role with the workshops in AY09. One element that was introduced to the workshops was an “On Course” game that engaged students in making decisions in their lives and other students could engage in making comments about their thought processes. The counselor remarked that students responded favorably to this element of the workshop.

**High School Writing Project – Faculty Discussions.** The High School Writing Project continued from last year. The project expanded to include more high schools, with a total of thirteen high schools participating in the project this year. The high schools that were initially recruited to participate in this project were selected due to their low performance in meeting annual AYP, such as Granite City and Collinsville. Other schools were invited to participate because SWIC’s ultimate goal was to meet in this format with all area high schools to discuss the expectations of college writers, gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by each of the area English faculties, and share grading strategies.

The High School Writing Project faculty meetings occurred five times in the fall 2008 semester and five times in the spring 2009 semester. The meetings were each 2 1/2 hours long and SWIC provided lunch at these meetings. All of the discussions were held at SWIC, either at the Belleville campus or the Red Bud campus. The high schools that participated in the fall and spring semesters were completely different. In the fall 2008 semester, there were 9 participants from 4 of the smaller high schools in the southern part of the district, and 3 from SWIC. In the spring 2009 semester, there were 15 participants from 5 of the larger high schools, and 4 from SWIC. SWIC used the grant money to pay for substitutes for the high school teachers during the meeting times. The CCR grant was also used to pay for release time for the SWIC Writing Coordinator to lead the project. Other SWIC faculty members were also given release time or a stipend supported financially though the CCR grant.

The goal of the High School Writing Project was to facilitate dialogue between high school faculty and SWIC faculty in English Departments to more closely align high school and college
writing expectations. The first meeting that occurred in the fall was an information-sharing meeting, where faculty discussed goals of the project, agenda for upcoming meetings, as well as challenges at the high schools. At the second meeting, instructors brought in sample assignments and activities that they felt showed their school’s “pedagogy and methodology” and discussed these activities. At the third meeting, the instructors discussed the number of students in developmental writing and conducted another norming session. At the fourth meeting, instructors brought in sample student essays that were assessed by the group. Each essay had at least two SWIC and two high school readers assess the piece. At the final meeting, the High School Writing Coordinator created and distributed a report based on the student essays that were assessed at the last meeting. Additionally, instructors discussed how they would return the papers back to their students and explain their scores. An evaluation survey was also distributed to all instructors involved with the project.

The first meeting of the spring semester involved discussion of remedial courses at SWIC, English curriculum, state standards, class sizes, and teaching assignments. Faculty members were also given five essays to score and planned to discuss the results of these grades at the next meeting. At the second meeting, instructors discussed a collection of assignments distributed at the last meeting and barriers to student learning. The group also discussed initiating student focus groups to get some useful information about student learning. At the third meeting, the group brainstormed ideas for student focus group questions, had a discussion about critical thinking in the classroom, and the developmental curriculum at SWIC. The High School Writing Coordinator also provided each instructor with a binder including “The Student Guide to the Portfolio”, explaining the portfolio process to students in the developmental English sequence at SWIC. The portfolio process involves faculty norming sessions twice each semester, followed by the scoring of a student’s portfolio. At the fourth meeting, the group discussed the Writing Ambassador Program, the intent and logistics behind the student focus groups, and also read more papers as a part of the norming session. At the final meeting of the semester, the High School Writing Coordinator discussed themes that emerged at the focus group he conducted at Highland High School, including teachers creating effective writing assignments and students feeling ownership over their writing. The group also discussed suggestions for this project for next year, writing labs at the high schools, what administrators should know about what English teachers do, and the issue of too many students in developmental writing classes in college.

The High School Writing Coordinator, who was present at both the fall and spring meetings, stated that during these meetings, the instructors found that the high school and SWIC curricula were fairly aligned and the writing expectations and standards were very close. This is also why the instructors wanted to explore other possible reasons for the gap in learning and thought that focus groups with students would be a good way to explore issues of why students were not being adequately prepared in writing when they entered college. While the principals of Triad, O’Fallon, Belleville East, Belleville West and Highland high schools were contacted to garner student participation in the focus groups, Highland High School was the only school that had the focus groups.

As a result of the High School Writing Project meetings, one of the English department chairs at Highland High School went back to her group to create a department-wide rubric. The High School Writing Coordinator mentioned that something he feels they should do is to follow up
with instructors three, or six months after these meetings to see what changes they have made, if any. Feedback from the writing faculty at SWIC and the high schools was positive, for the most part, and they expressed appreciation for this unique opportunity. They felt that building bridges with other educators in the area was the most beneficial part of the project. Additionally, knowing that they are not the only ones with these issues and that the English instructors were all “part of the same battle” was also very reassuring. The High School Writing Coordinator, especially, expressed a great deal of enthusiasm for the project and felt that the instructors who were participating in the project “want nothing more than to see their students succeed.”

In addition to the faculty discussions, the High School Writing Project also included an English chairs meeting on June 11th, 2009. A total of nine English chairs participated in the meeting. The English chairs remarked that discussion amongst the group was very beneficial, especially learning about what is expected of students if they go to SWIC. For future meetings, the English chairs recommended to meet longer and/or more frequently. Multiple people mentioned that they would like for faculty members from SWIC to come and speak to high school students through the Writing Ambassador Program.

**High School Writing Project – Writing Ambassador Program.** A new aspect of the High School Writing Project that was introduced this year was the Writing Ambassador Program. This project was actually a suggestion from one of the high school English teachers who felt that it would be helpful to have someone from the college English faculty come and speak to high school classes about college reading and writing requirements. They felt it would be very helpful for students to hear about college expectations and requirement from someone from the college. In response to this request, in the fall 2008 semester the High School Writing Coordinator from SWIC went to Collinsville High School. This instructor met with 18-19 senior English classes, which was a total of 344 students. The Writing Coordinator discussed the importance of writing and college writing expectations with the students.

The Writing Coordinator distributed a survey to all the students that asked them about their experiences with writing and what they consider to be “good” writing. The English teachers from Collinsville, whose classes the Writing Coordinator visited, were also surveyed for their feedback about the Writing Ambassador Program. On the whole, the teachers felt that it was helpful to have someone from the college come and speak to the students about college writing expectations.

Another faculty member went to Valmeyer High School in the spring 2009 semester and spoke to 27 students senior students there as part of the Writing Ambassador Program. SWIC plans to continue these efforts next year, particularly to Belleville East and West High Schools, who have expressed interest in the program.

**High School Math Project – Faculty Discussions.** The High School Math Project is a project that continues from previous years. It originally started with communication between SWIC personnel and math faculty at Highland High School approximately three years ago. To date SWIC has had the opportunity to meet with math faculty groups from 17 high schools. In AY09 meetings were held with the math faculty from seven high schools. These meetings generally consisted of the majority of the math faculty from one high school and the Math Chair
and/or the Math & Sciences Dean. Sixty-one math faculty, two administrators, and two
counselors from the high schools met with SWIC personnel at various times throughout the year
to discuss the high school and college math curriculum as well as the math portion of
COMPASS.

Although the purpose of these meetings was curriculum alignment, the approach of the meetings
was to have a particular focus on a curricular issue, not necessarily a content issue. One issue,
for example, was the effective use of technology in math classrooms. There are a number of
various technology systems being used by the high schools, so this was a good topic of
discussion. The faculty members also discussed pedagogy and active learning in math
classrooms. Participants had the opportunity to take the COMPASS test to experience the
questions and the format of the test. Additionally, each meeting included discussion about the
high school’s specific curriculum such as sequence of courses, ability levels for courses,
implementation of the geometry requirement, particular challenges at their school, information
about SWIC’s curriculum, the IAI geometry requirement at SWIC, placement procedures at
SWIC, and concerns expressed to the high school faculty by returning students.

Feedback from the math faculty at the area high schools was very positive. Surveys were
completed by the instructors after their participation in the faculty discussions. Many of the
faculty members commented that experiencing the COMPASS test was one of the most
beneficial parts of the faculty discussions. In fact, one of the instructors commented, “We now
understand why our students have trouble with the test.” As a result of these meetings, some
high school teachers changed their math instruction to present material in a variety of ways so
students will be better prepared to handle questions posed in different formats. Many
commented on the importance of reviewing algebra skills throughout the high school curriculum.
Others suggested they would return to their schools and discuss the importance of taking the
assessment seriously with their students. The opportunity to offer dual credit through SWIC was
listed as a potential partnership that some of the high schools would like to see in the future.

In addition to the faculty discussions, the High School Math Project also included
a Math Department Chair Meeting on April 25, 2009. A total of 13 math chairs participated in
the meeting from district high schools. Teachers were given a stipend of $25/hour for attending,
could earn CPDU’s and were also served brunch. The outlines for math curricula at SWIC and
at each of the area high schools were discussed, focusing specifically on Math 094, Math 096,
and Math 097. The teachers also discussed the process of college placement, with a great deal of
discussion focusing on the COMPASS test and SWIC. There was universal agreement by the
math chairs that students must take four years of math in high school to be college and career
ready. Finally, there was considerable discussion about the use of technology in the form of on-
line homework systems and tutorials. As reported by the SWIC Math Department Chair, the
meeting went very well and gave the math chairs an opportunity to discuss course content and
the alignment of curriculum. Many participants stated that there was a lack of time and
opportunities to discuss these challenges and that this type of meeting should be an annual or
semiannual event.

Finally, a Counselors Meeting was held on June 12th, 2009 to discuss the COMPASS test and
math placement process at SWIC. There were 9 total counselors from SWIC and the following
High schools: Marissa, Collinsville, Belleville West, Collinsville, Sparta, Red Bud, Lebanon, and Mascoutah. This group asked many questions about the placement process with the intent that they could more accurately explain the process to their high school students. They appreciated the opportunity to discuss other questions students often ask as they move from high school to college with a SWIC counselor and an academic dean who could give them accurate information about math coursework. The other projects within the CCR grant were also explained and there was much interest in someone from SWIC coming to their schools for Junior Compass Testing and the Writing Ambassador Program. The counselors indicated it is usually easier for SWIC to bring activities to their schools, than for the students to come to SWIC.

High School Math Project – Junior COMPASS Testing. SWIC continued the administration of the COMPASS test to high school juniors from Highland High School, Collinsville High School, Sparta High School, Red Bud High School, and Dupo High School. The only new high school involved with COMPASS testing this year was Dupo High School. A total of 746 students were COMPASS tested. The COMPASS testing was administered at area high schools and the various SWIC campuses by a retired SWIC math faculty member. Tests were conducted on laptops provided by SWIC. Timing for the test varied among the high schools. At Red Bud High School, for example, COMPASS testing was administered right after the PSAE. In contrast, Sparta High School wanted to conduct COMPASS testing before the PSAE. In contrast, Sparta High School wanted to conduct COMPASS testing before the PSAE to give students practice with multiple choice exams.

Before students took the test, SWIC faculty members discussed a flowchart with students about the sequence of math classes at SWIC and also briefly discussed results with the students after they took the COMPASS exam and encouraged them to take another math class. High school math faculty who helped coordinate the administration of COMPASS at their high school felt that it was very helpful for students to realize what they have learned and served as a “wake-up call” in showing them their true skills. Almost all the faculty surveyed after the COMPASS testing stated that the biggest strength of this initiative was that it served as an eye-opener for students and showed them where they were placing and how much improvement they still needed.

It is unknown how many of the students who participated in Junior COMPASS testing met with their high school counselors after they took the test to discuss their results. Many high school math faculty mentioned to the CCR Project Coordinator and Math Department Chair that they discussed COMPASS test results with their students. When asked about whether students could change their high school schedules as a result of COMPASS test scores, the math faculty replied that they saw this as a push in the right direction (presumably because the students recognized the value of taking rigorous courses and were asking to schedule such courses.)

High School Math Project - Senior Math Project. A new project introduced as part of the High School Math Project this year, was the Senior math course, or “Math 911”. This math course for seniors at Waterloo High School was for students who have been somewhat challenged in math, similar to Basic Algebra, and was designed to encourage this group to take a fourth year of math. A group of 40 seniors enrolled in this course were assessed in math on COMPASS in September and returned in April take the full COMPASS. The goal was to use
information from the assessments to assist this high school math faculty with examining the worth of the course and making adjustments, as needed.

Of the 40 students that took the COMPASS test in September, 28 re-took the COMPASS in April. From the 28 students that re-took the test in April, 11 students raised their placement in the COMPASS math. Fifteen students maintained their placement, with four increasing their algebra sub-scores substantially. Two students’ scores were lower on the second attempt. An administrator noted that some students remarked that they had a difficult time taking the test in April after sitting and listening so long prior to the test. The administrator also felt that those students who were not planning to come to SWIC may not have taken the testing seriously. It is unknown whether adjustments were made to the course as a result of this project, but this high school was anxious to repeat this project again in spring 2010.

**Faculty Workshops.** Two sessions of a faculty workshop were held on June 5 and June 6, 2009. The workshop was entitled “Activities and Games to Engage Students in Algebra and Geometry Classrooms” and was held at the SWIC Belleville campus. Sue and Randy Pippen, who facilitated two sessions of another CCR workshop held at SWIC in AY08, led the workshops this year as well. The CCR program coordinator sent letters to area high school principals to inform their teachers of the opportunity to participate in the faculty workshop. Flyers were also attached to these letters to be distributed by principals to teachers at their schools. She also sent emails regarding the workshops to math and English high school faculty and counselors with whom she had come into contact on other CCR Grant projects. Teachers were given lunch and a stipend of $25/hour and also had the opportunity to earn CPDUs. A total of 73 instructors from SWIC and area high schools participated in the workshops, with 40 teachers at the first session and 33 at the second session. Teachers from 20 area high schools participated in the workshops. Feedback from the workshop was very positive, with teachers remarking that they enjoyed the hands-on activities that the workshop facilitators shared. One teacher remarked on one of the surveys “Love the fact that community college (SWIC) is reaching out to area schools. Hope this continues.”

New to the faculty workshops in AY09 was the addition of two sessions of an English workshop for high school teachers. The five-hour workshop was called “Write Through the Heart” and held on June 12 and June 13, 2009. Teachers were provided with lunch, a $125 stipend, and the opportunity to earn CPDUs. A total of 44 instructors participated in the workshops, with 28 instructors at the Friday session and 16 at the Saturday session. There were 13 high schools represented at the English workshops. Overall, the feedback from the English teachers was very positive. They enjoyed the “practical” and “creative” activities that were a part of the workshop. Suggestions for future improvement included more time for the workshop and more sessions of the workshop.

**Interviews with Instructors**

- Program instructors for the CSI program were recruited by the CCR program coordinator and were largely chosen based on past professional relationships she had with them. For example, the Math 094 instructor at East St. Louis High School was chosen because the CCR program coordinator was aware that he was a retired teacher with experience in teaching
math at the high school level. When asked how and why the CCR program coordinator chose the Math instructors, she remarked that having high school experience was a criterion she was looking for in potential instructors. Two of the three instructors for the math courses were people she contacted to work on the CCR project. One of the instructors contacted her because he was looking for work. The program coordinator mentioned that hiring for this position had been somewhat challenging since there were union regulations to abide by.

- All three of the instructors that we interviewed had previous experience teaching in their content areas. The years of experience ranged from seven years teaching at the college level for the youngest instructor to over thirty years for the more experienced instructors. Two of the instructors we interviewed taught Math 094, and one taught Math 097.

- When asked whether or not they felt that their students would be ready for college in the fall, two of the three instructors stated yes. The instructors were honest in that they remarked how a few of the students would struggle with upper-level Math courses, but the two instructors felt that their students’ maturity level and ability to complete work outside of the classroom adequately equipped them for college. The instructor that did not think his/her students would be ready for college in the fall said that his/her students were unaware of the skills and activities necessary to complete college coursework.

- When asked what the common challenges were for students in their classes, instructors commented that it was difficult for students to balance the demands of college coursework and additional responsibilities and activities outside of the classroom. One instructor commented on the lack of student – teacher communication outside of the classroom and another instructor commented that it was challenging for students to simply show up to his class. Issues like time-management skills and completion of homework were common concerns among program instructors.

- When asked what elements of the CCR program were most beneficial for their students, instructors varied in their responses. One instructor commented that he/she thought it was good for his younger students to interact with adult students who were “more mature.” This instructor noticed that his/her younger students tried to “match” the older students’ behavior in the class and he perceived this as a valuable experience for the younger students. Another instructor stated that discussions about getting to know your college professor, where to get help in college, and discussing study strategies related to math were beneficial for CCR participants. Another instructor commented that he/she thought the fact that students had the chance to get college credit at “no cost to them” was beneficial.

- When asked about their respective classroom pedagogies, one instructor commented that in addition to teaching the course content, he/she talked about college expectations with the students in open and explicit ways. The other two instructors did not do this in their classrooms and one instructor said that he/she asked the CCR program coordinator how to ‘run’ his/her classroom and was told to contour his class like a college course. Instructors approached their classrooms differently and this approach was guided by their understanding of both the CCR program and their role within the program. Two of the three instructors ‘ran’ their classroom like a ‘college class’ where students were treated as if they were in
college. One of the instructors shaped her class like a hybrid, discussing college-related information in addition to the course material.

- One instructor decided to take a different approach and created a classroom similar to a high school class. The instructor told students “how” to study and how often to study in order to be successful in college-level math coursework. The instructor also talked with students about how to keep track of their grades in the course and frequently reminded them that it was “their responsibility” to monitor their individual progress. Cognizant that students are in high school all day and busy with extracurricular activities after school, this instructor also spent time reminding students of deadlines and interacting one-on-one in class. The instructor also gave students a contact phone number in case they needed to call about an absence or another issue, saying they could call “if they really needed something.”

**Interviews with Students**

SWIC identified high school students for CCR in a couple of ways. For the high schools where ACT scores were available (Belleville West, Collinsville), a composite ACT range of 16-20 was used to identify students to be considered for the CCR program. They were invited to participate in SWIC’S Mission Success (includes introduction to college services, COMPASS assessment, short discussion with counselor about math and English placement); those who placed into a Math 094 or Math 097 course were encouraged to register for one of the courses. The COMPASS cut-off scores were 21 in ALG or 34 in PALG for Math 094 and 40 in ALG for Math 097. The students who participated in the CSI program were from Cahokia High School, East St. Louis High School, SIUE East St. Louis Charter School, Collinsville High School, and Belleville West High School. These five high schools did not meet AYP in math in 2008. Students from these high schools participated in Math 094 (Basic Algebra) and Math 097 (Intermediate Algebra) courses based on where their COMPASS math scores placed them.

Student participation and outcomes for the second year of the program are as follows:

- **Junior COMPASS Assessment** – During the 2008-2009 school year a total of 746 students from Collinsville (357), Highland (205), Sparta (100), Dupo (42), and Red Bud (42) High Schools were administered the COMPASS test in order to give them the opportunity to address possible gaps in their high school education so as to change their study habits and/or to take additional math courses to sharpen their mathematical abilities.

- **College Success Initiative (CSI) ED 101** – During the second year of implementation, 92 students from East St. Louis High School, Cahokia High School, and East St. Louis Charter School, and 55 students from Collinsville High School took the COMPASS test in order to determine their placement in CSI courses. Twenty-one students from the three high schools enrolled in and completed ED 101 (Freshman Seminar) in the Fall of 2008 at the East St. Louis Community College Center. All 21 students completed the course with a C or better to earn a stipend of $100.

- **CSI Math Courses**
Students from Cahokia High School, East St. Louis High School, and East St. Louis Charter School took Math 094 during Spring semester at the East St. Louis Community College Center, with 2 out of the 18 students completing the course with a C or better. Students from Collinsville High School took Math 094 and 097 during Spring semester at Collinsville, with 14 of 25 students completing the course with a C or better and 4 of 6 students completing Math 097 with a C or better. Sixteen students from Belleville West High School and Collinsville High School took Math 094 (9 students) and Math 097 (7 students) during the summer at the Belleville Campus. From Belleville West High School, 4 out of the 9 students completed the class with a C or better, and from Collinsville, 5 out of the 7 students completed with a C or better.

Of the 24 students who remained in the program at the end of the spring semester, 18 were female, 5 were male, and 1 identified as transgender. Fifteen of the students were White, 5 students were Latino, 2 students were African American, 1 student was multi-racial, and 1 student chose not to identify. Fourteen of the students in the program plan to attend a community college after high school, while 7 students plan to attend a four-year institution (the remaining students were unsure). All 14 community college bound students plan on attending SWIC, 5 students plan on enrolling at Southern Illinois-Edwardsville, and 1 student plans on going to Southern Illinois Carbondale, 1 student to Missouri State, and 1 student to Eastern Illinois University (the remaining two student were unsure of their plans).

- **Workshops for students** – Out of the 92 students eligible to attend from Cahokia High School, East St. Louis High School, and East St. Louis Charter School, only 28 students total attended workshops. More complete numbers are unavailable.

- **Senior Math Project (“Math 911”)** – Forty-three students from the two Senior Math classes at Waterloo High School took the math portion of the COMPASS test at SWIC. In September 40 students participated and 31 students took the assessment in April. Of the 43 total students, 28 students took the test twice, and 11 students were able to raise their COMPASS math placement.

Focus group participants were chosen from one section of Math 094. Two members of the evaluation team from the Office of Community College Research and Leadership conducted the focus group interviews. The students were split into two focus groups and the interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes. The interviews were conducted in a computer lab and a classroom without the instructor present. The following themes emerged from the interview data:

- Students learned about the program at SWIC in various ways. Some students attended an assembly at their high school where a representative from SWIC spoke about the program. Other students received information about the program from high school teachers or counselors.
• Students expressed that they thought the program was a good opportunity to receive college credit because the program was free. The students also saw the program as a way to brush up on their math skills.

• Students enjoyed the way the math course was taught. In comparison to their high school math courses, students felt as though they were able to connect better with this instructor and that the instructor was there for help and was always willing to clarify concepts in class.

• Students felt more excited about the transition to college and less nervous. The program helped the students learn the importance of motivation, accountability, and good study habits when it comes to college courses.

• Students agreed that the math course moved at a faster pace than their high school courses, but because the instructor was willing to provide help and clarification, they were able to keep up with the pace and understand the material.

• When asked about why some of their fellow classmates dropped the course, students explained that they believed it was because these students needed to work and the course was causing them to miss out on hours at their jobs. The interview participants also attributed lack of motivation as a reason for why some classmates might have dropped the course.

• Although some of the students stated that the course caused them to miss out on hours at their jobs, they also explained that they felt that the course was offered at the best possible time for them.

Analysis

SWIC increased the number of high schools participating in the CCR program in AY09. The coordinator of the CCR program started choosing high schools for the program in AY08 based on her connections and suggestions from others within the college. In AY09, s/he tried to seek find high schools that did not make AYP, which was 16 out of the 27 high schools. S/he also mentioned that s/he did not want to “punish” certain schools by not including them in the CCR project simply because they did make AYP; therefore, SWIC continued to work with a few schools who met AYP last year. The CCR program coordinator’s contacts continue to be a positive element of this program as she is able to use her network to recruit instructors for the CCR program.

Goal 1: Diagnose College Readiness. The first goal of the CCR Act is to diagnose college readiness by “developing a system to align ACT scores.” SWIC used ACT scores of 16-20 to initially target students for the CCR interventions. However, in some cases where ACT scores are not available, SWIC used COMPASS scores to identify students. COMPASS scores were also used to place students in the CCR interventions, and they were used as a pre- and post-test measure. SWIC made extra efforts to test students using COMPASS for the CCR interventions, even in situations where technology was not available at the high schools. In these instances, SWIC took portable technology to the high schools to facilitate the administration of COMPASS.
Goal 2: Reduce Remediation. SWIC’s CSI Initiative in AY09 offered students the opportunity to be remediated in both Beginners and Intermediate Algebra, which is different from AY08 when students were taking Beginners Algebra only. Another of SWIC’s interventions, the Senior Math class, also works to improve senior students’ math skills and reduce their need for remedial coursework at the college level. While SWIC has multiple CCR initiatives that strived to reduce the need for remedial coursework in mathematics, the area of English remediation was not emphasized. None of their interventions offered students extra assistance or coursework in reading or writing.

While a new component to SWIC’s program in AY09, the Writing Ambassador Program, allowed SWIC English faculty to speak to students about college writing expectations, students did not have any opportunity to take an English course or engage in writing opportunities as part of the CCR program. The Writing Ambassador Program, overall, was received very positively. A few teachers commented that the Writing Coordinator did a good job talking to students “at their level.” Other high schools also expressed interest in having the Writing Ambassador Program come to their school. However, one teacher felt that the students who needed it the most were “uninterested.” The teachers also felt that the program could be improved if the class was given more “hands on” material to work with, such as college class syllabi, sample lessons and sample papers that were scored.

Goal 3: Align Curriculum. SWIC networked with many local high schools to offer a variety of opportunities for faculty and administrators in both English and math. The CCR program coordinator’s networks and contacts were beneficial in gathering groups of faculty members. SWIC’s efforts to include discussions for math and English chairs, in addition to faculty members, is commendable. Surveys from both the chairs meeting and faculty meetings showed that participants were pleased with the meetings and expressed interest in future meetings. A few teachers walked away from the meetings with definite plans of how to incorporate what they learned in their classrooms and to create rubrics for their English classes. The coordinator of the High School Writing Project is also an asset to SWIC’s team, leading components of this project and devoting time and energy towards curriculum alignment.

However, there were some complaints and challenges cited by high school faculty members about the curriculum alignment meetings. Some observed that it is challenging to leave the same classrooms for five afternoons a semester, even with substitutes. To address this concern, the idea was thrown out to stagger the times for the next iteration of the project in AY10. An administrator also stated that s/he received some resistance in spring 2009, where some of the high school instructors felt that “assumptions” being made about what they were doing. There were some “dropping of degrees” during the meetings, and some high school instructors stated they were not sure “where these meetings were going.” Finally, some high school instructors stated that they came to the meetings thinking they would be something different than what they were, observing that the rubric distributed at the meetings was “vague” and “wasn’t something I could show my students, and say this is what I’m talking about.” Some observed it would have been more productive for college faculty members to show tell high school instructors more of what is expected in college, as opposed to engaging the faculty in grading papers.
Goal 4: Provide Resources and Academic Supports to Enrich the Senior Year. One way that SWIC worked to meet this goal in AY09 was through the Student Workshops that included a SWIC counselor who led the planning and implementation of the student workshops. In addition to this, s/he helped bridge some communication gaps with East St. Louis High School. However, detailed information about the Student Workshops was not available to the OCCRL team.

The Freshman Seminar course was also a way to provide academic support to students. However, in contrast to AY08, the seminar was not mandatory for all students enrolling in CSI. Rather, only students in the fall cohort at Collinsville had the opportunity to enroll in the seminar, and those enrolled in the math component were not required to enroll in the Freshman Seminar, which the OCCRL evaluation team saw as a major setback from AY08. The CCR program coordinator distributed study strategies worksheets to the math instructors in the CCR classes to discuss with their students. While the CCR program coordinator stated that these study strategies and time management tips were to be discussed every week, the instructors OCCRL team members spoke to did not share them with their students, or were not aware of them at all. While this goal of the CCR Act was attempting to be met in various ways, the efforts were disjointed and lacked clarity and substance.

Goal 5: Develop and Appropriate Evaluation. SWIC’s process of tracking cohorts is not going well. The Institutional Researcher commented that they need time to process the data, and other priorities take precedence, given the change in computing systems recently employed by the college. Because the data are complex, the Institutional Researcher is still mastering the query language. In terms of measurement, SWIC has developed evaluation tools for all interventions, which is commendable. For all faculty meetings and workshops, SWIC distributed surveys to the participants to obtain their feedback. SWIC also administered the COMPASS test before and after the math components of their initiatives to gauge student improvement. Not only were evaluation tools developed for all of SWIC’s initiatives, but these instruments and results were readily accessible to the OCCRL team. A major asset of SWIC’s CCR program is the CCR program coordinator’s organization and diligence in sharing information with the state and the OCCRL evaluation team, even after the site visit was completed.
References


PL 095-0694, Section 5 of the Public Community College Act, Sec. 2.24, College and Career Readiness Pilot Program.
APPENDIX A

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ACT
Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly:

Section 5. The Public Community College Act is amended by adding Section 2.24 as follows:

(110 ILCS 805/2.24 new)
Sec. 2.24. College and Career Readiness Pilot Program.

(a) The General Assembly finds that there is a direct and significant link between students being academically prepared for college and success in postsecondary education. Many students enter college unprepared for the academic rigors of college and require noncredit remedial courses to attain skills and knowledge needed for regular, credit course work. Remediation lengthens time to degree, imposes additional costs on students and colleges, and uses student financial aid for courses that will not count toward a degree. All high school juniors take the Prairie State Achievement Examination, which contains the ACT college assessment exam. ACT test elements and scores can be correlated to specific course placements in community colleges. Customized ACT test results can be used in collaboration with high schools to assist high school students identify areas for improvement and help them close skill gaps during their senior year. Greater college and career readiness will reduce the need for remediation, lower educational costs, shorten time to degree, and increase the overall success rate of Illinois college students.

(b) Subject to appropriation, the State Board shall create a 3-year pilot project, to be known as the College and Career Readiness Pilot Program.

The goals of the program are as follows:

1. To diagnose college readiness by developing a system to align ACT scores to specific community college courses in developmental and freshman curriculums.

2. To reduce remediation by decreasing the need for remedial course work in mathematics, reading, and writing at the college level through (i) increasing the number of students enrolled in a college-prep core curriculum, (ii) assisting students in improving college readiness skills, and (iii) increasing successful student transitions into postsecondary education.

3. To align high school and college curriculums.

4. To provide resources and academic support to students to enrich the senior year of high school through remedial or advanced course work and other interventions.

5. To develop an appropriate evaluation process to measure the effectiveness of readiness intervention strategies.

(c) The first year of the program created under this Section shall begin with the high school class of 2008.

1. The State Board shall select 4 community colleges to participate in the program based on all of the following:

   A. The percentage of students in developmental course work.

   B. Demographics of student enrollment, including socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, and enrollments of first-generation college students.

   C. Geographic diversity.

   D. The willingness of the community college to submit developmental and introductory courses to ACT for analysis of college placement.

   E. The ability of the community college to partner with local high schools to develop college and career readiness strategies and college readiness teams.

2. The State Board shall work with ACT to analyze up to 10 courses at each participating community college for purposes of determining student placement and college readiness.

3. Each participating community college shall establish an agreement with a high school or schools to do all
of the following:
(A) Create a data-sharing agreement.
(B) Create a Readiness Prescription for each student, showing all of the following:
   (i) The readiness status for college-level work.
   (ii) Course recommendations for remediation or for advanced course work in Advanced Placement classes or
dual credit and dual enrollment programs.
   (iii) Additional academic support services, including tutoring, mentoring, and college application assistance.
(C) Create college and career readiness teams comprised of faculty and counselors or advisers from the
community college and high school, the college and career readiness coordinator from the community
college, and other members as determined by the high school and community college. The teams may include
local business or civic leaders. The teams shall develop intervention
strategies as follows:
   (i) Use the Readiness Prescription to develop a contract with each student for remedial or advanced course
   work to be taken during the senior year.
   (ii) Monitor student progress.
   (iii) Provide readiness support services.
(D) Retest students in the spring of 2008 to assess progress and college readiness.
(4) The State Board shall work with participating community colleges and high schools to develop an
appropriate evaluation process to measure the effectiveness of intervention strategies, including all of the
following:
(A) Baseline data for each participating school.
(B) Baseline data for the Illinois system.
(C) Comparison of ACT scores from March 2007 to March 2008.
(D) Student enrollment in college in the fall of 2008.
(E) Placement of college and career readiness students in developmental and regular courses in the fall of
2008.
(F) Retention of college and career readiness students in the spring semester of 2009.
(5) The State Board shall work with participating community colleges and high schools to establish
operational processes and a budget for college and career readiness pilot programs, including all of the
following:
(A) Employment of a college and career readiness coordinator at each community college site.
(B) Establishment of a budget.
(C) Creation of college and career readiness teams, resources, and partnership agreements.
(d) The second year of the program created under this Section shall begin with the high school class of 2009.
   In the second year, the State Board shall have all of the following duties:
   (1) Analyze courses at 3 new community college sites.
   (2) Undertake intervention strategies through college and career readiness teams with students in the class
of 2009.
   (3) Monitor and assist college and career readiness graduates from the class of 2008 in college.
   (e) The third year of the program created under this Section shall begin with the high school class of 2010. In
the third year, the State Board shall have all of the following duties:
   (1) Analyze courses at 5 new community college sites.
   (2) Add college and career readiness teams at 3 new sites (from year 2 of the program).
   (3) Undertake intervention strategies through college and career readiness teams with students of the class
of 2010 at 7 sites.
   (4) Monitor and assist students from the classes of 2008 and 2009 in college.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.