Community College of Denver

Case Study Report – Data as of May 2013

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INTRODUCTION

In 2011, Colorado received a $17.3 million Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. The grant-funded project—the Colorado Online Energy Training Consortium (COETC)—has two principal purposes: 1) enhance the state's energy-related programming by transforming curricula into more accessible formats using technology and mobile learning labs, and 2) develop and implement a redesign of the state's developmental education (DE) program. Project goals include expanding access to degree and certificate programs in energy-related fields, increasing retention and completion of certificate and degree programs at the community college level, and developing a trained workforce for a changing job market.

The COETC project involves the thirteen colleges in the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) and two local district colleges, Aims Community College (Aims) and Colorado Mountain College (CMC).

CCCS contracted with Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations (Rutgers) to be the COETC third-party evaluator. In this role, the Rutgers team created and implemented a multi-faceted research assessment design that includes quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.

A major component of Rutgers' COETC evaluation is a cohort study that compares the educational outcomes for students enrolled in traditional courses to those for students enrolled in COETC-developed and funded courses. In particular, this research focuses on COETC's second goal as described above. The study's objective is to assess the success of DE courses restructured under the guidelines of the Colorado State Task Force on Developmental Education Redesigns (State Task Force) and the success of the redesigned energy courses at the seven participating energy colleges. Specifically, it will evaluate the impact of factors such as demographics, Accuplacer scores, course registrations, student grades, employment status, and wages on rates of retention, program completion, and employment after graduation. The methodology consists of quantitative analyses of student and course data from Fall 2011 through Spring 2014 along with qualitative analyses of student experiences.

Toward the end of the Spring 2013 semester, Rutgers distributed four reports covering the study data collected to date from individual colleges and the consortium as a whole: "Integrated Year End Report," "Career Coach Caseloads Analysis," "Redesigned Course Outcomes," and "Master Course List." This case study provides an interim report, based on data provided in these reports, on the progress to date of Community College of Denver (CCD) under the COETC grant as of May 2013.

The sections that follow 1) outline the overall study methodology and data sources, 2) provide background information on CCD and its student population, 3) summarize the goals and primary elements of CCD's COETC program, 4) describe the redesigned DE courses (math and

English/reading) and present data on enrollment and outcomes, 5) assess the success of the career coaching program instituted by CCD as part of its COETC program, and 6) conclude with recommendations for CCD with regard to its COETC-funded program.

METHODOLOGY/DATA SOURCES

Quantitative Analysis

During the first project year, Rutgers worked closely with CCCS to refine the quarterly reports required from each of the system's participating colleges. Rutgers has used data from these reports to track progress and to provide the foundation for other data collection. In collaboration with CCCS, the district colleges, and college career coaches, Rutgers developed and revised an Electronic Student Case File (ESCF) to capture data relating to the COETC career coaches' work with grant-eligible students. (The ESCF records demographic and academic information and tracks the issues and goals coaches and students work on and any referrals made.) In addition, Rutgers designed a pre-course survey to collect information on student expectations about course work and career goals. The colleges administered this survey to students in traditional and redesigned DE courses in Fall 2012.

The Rutgers team has also been working closely with CCCS and the district colleges to access the Banner student system (and CCD's data system) to track student progress and achievement and to collect and analyze data for the cohort study.

Qualitative Analysis

Rutgers' qualitative evaluation focuses on COETC process issues and the experiences of project team members and participating students, faculty, and staff at the 15 colleges in the COETC consortium.

As part of this analysis, team members reviewed relevant documents, text answers from quarterly reports, ESCFs, pre-course survey results, and materials and websites developed by the State Task Force, CCCS, and/or individual colleges. Rutgers team members have conducted phone and in-person interviews with project leads, faculty involved in the restructuring and/or teaching of DE and energy courses, instructional designers, data coordinators, senior college administrators, and, whenever possible, students. They conducted on-site interviews at CCD on November 5, 2012. The team members have analyzed transcriptions of phone and in-person interviews to identify program achievements to date, best practices, and critical issues for follow-up. Some of the responses from these interviews are quoted in this report.

Rutgers team members have also participated in conference calls with project leads and career coaches and joined in webinars. In addition, they have observed and participated in forums sponsored by CCCS, such as sessions on DE redesigns.

COLLEGE DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW OF STUDENT POPULATION

Community College of Denver is an urban college located in the heart of Colorado's capital. Denver's population numbers more than 600,000 people, which makes it the largest city in Colorado. The city is home to numerous colleges and universities. CCD, in fact, shares a campus with Metropolitan State University of Denver, a 24,000 student liberal arts university, and the Denver branch of the University of Colorado, which serves an additional 29,000 students. The shared campus also contains historical buildings, museums, and cultural and arts centers.

CCD offers associate degrees and certifications in over 100 fields, including business, early childhood education, engineering, and health sciences. Students can use these programs to launch a career or in preparation for transfer to a four-year institution. CCD also has a full-time career development center devoted to helping students navigate the challenging and ever-changing job market.

As of Spring 2012, CCD's enrollment totaled 12,474 students. Of these, 3,352 students (24.6 percent) were enrolled full-time and 9,122 (75.9 percent) were part-time.

CCD is the most diverse postsecondary institution in Colorado. Over 50 percent of its student population is minority and nearly 45 percent are first-generation students. Since 2000, CCD has also been designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution. Hispanic students now make up a full quarter of CCD's student population.

Regional high school students also enroll at CCD as part of the Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program. The mean student age at CCD is 27. (This number is slightly higher when the high school students are excluded.) As of Spring 2012, 7,110 students (57 percent) were women and 5,364 (43 percent) men.

CCD'S COETC GOALS AND PRIMARY PROGRAM ELEMENTS

CCD's principal focus for the COETC grant is bringing students who return to school with out-of-date skill sets up to the speed they need to compete in today's job market. Its efforts in this respect include facilitating student enrollment in the energy programs being developed and/or redesigned under the COETC grant and earning an industry-recognized credential.

To be more specific, CCD is targeting students who have been underemployed or unemployed and who are now seeking entry in high-demand occupations. Many of these potential students require remedial education because they have not attended college previously or they attended so long ago that their knowledge and skills need refreshing. CCD's goal under the grant is to provide these students with accelerated remedial education that brings their foundational skills up to the level needed to succeed in college-level courses and/or complete certificate and degree programs in energy or other fields. In its initial grant work, CCD set out to build on its FastStart remedial model which focuses on acceleration, which makes use of learning communities,

learning labs, online courses, and content from the National Repository of Online Courses (NROC).

In addition, CCD planned to hire a career coach/case manager to assist returning students and unemployed/underemployed students with academic and non-academic issues. Specifically, the career coach would be coordinating recruitment and screening, communicating with instructors in terms of the services available and student issues as they arise, and providing student support services such as career exploration and guidance assistance. At the same time, he or she would be encouraging enrollment in energy programs in conjunction with the statewide plan.

CCD'S REDESIGNED DE PROGRAM

CCD began redesigning its DE curriculum in 2006, when it received a Lumina grant to assess the costs and strategies of serving academically underprepared students and has been moving forward with its redesign since then. In the first phase of this work, done under the Lumina grant, CCD established its FastStart program. This work included combining English and reading classes, compressing two levels of developmental math and developing learning communities. In the next phase of its redesign, CCD expanded the FastStart program and increased its use of course contextualization and co-teaching. The third phase of this work began in Spring 2013 as CCD started to offer the DE courses mandated by the State Task Force. We note here that this report focuses solely on the first and second phases of CCD's redesign, that is, the revisions made before the college began implementing the State Task Force guidelines.

English/Reading Redesign

Between Spring 2012 and Spring 2013, 1,175 CCD students were enrolled in redesigned English courses and 601 in redesigned reading courses. These redesigns focused on using compression to help students accelerate completion of their developmental education.

English Reading Redesign Innovative Models and Practices

Learning Communities. Beginning with its Lumina grant, CCD has piloted a variety of strategies to create learning communities made up of students enrolled in remedial courses linked with content either within or across disciplines. As of the start of the COETC grant all of the FastStart courses were delivered as learning communities. In 2010, CCD also combined remedial math and English courses and had both instructors present during each class to create a true co-instruction model. CCD has found that the paired classes create a strong sense of community among students, as evidenced by these two comments:

> *"I like that it got mixed in with the remedial, and again in my other classes, I don't speak to hardly any of the other students. I don't know most of them by their name and here I know everybody's first name. And if I see each other around the campus, hey, what's up."*

"It's a real open environment. You really get to know each other."

In these paired courses, students support and learn from one another. Faculty members have also observed that paired classes give students a chance to showcase their different strengths. For example, a student weak in math might be a class leader in English, while a student poor English might end up tutoring her classmates in math. This helps build student confidence along with their remedial skills.

As part of the English/reading redesign, CCD also offered a nine-credit course unit that combined English and reading with a college transfer-level course such as psychology or biology. Prior to enrolling in this unit, students had to meet with an adviser to discuss the schedule of class meetings and the intense time commitment required. As with the math and English combination, students in these more intensive courses built strong communal relationships that facilitated learning subjects that often challenged them in other settings. The students involved reported liking the co-teaching model used in these combined courses. As one student observed,

> …the instructors get along and have a mutual respect for each other as professionals and as humans and the different way of teaching. But they're on the same page, and that's what makes it great.

Group Work. During the Rutgers site visit, students praised the level of cooperation they experienced in their redesigned DE course group work. Their sense of "being in it together" along with the extended contact they had with one another helped create a "very tight knit" community of mutual trust and support. These students also had positive things to say about the peer learning opportunities they had in their linked courses.

Peer Learning. As noted above, students felt that the peer learning aspect of their combined classes enriched and deepened their knowledge and understanding of a subject. In their combined English and reading courses, for example, students engage in peer editing. This very popular practice can help students hone their writing and editing skills. Even students who were unsure if their writing had improved as a result of the course felt their understanding of *the process* had increased. As one noted,

> *"I feel I learn better with others, I like to communicate, I like to talk, I like to bounce ideas off people, get feedback, (and) give feedback. So that was one of the big things for me and one of the – has been one of the best things for me in this class is getting, giving and receiving feedback from so many different peers."*

Digital Storytelling. CCD faculty members have introduced digital storytelling as a project-based learning strategy. Digital storytelling requires students to work alone and together to interpret course content and express their ideas and knowledge verbally and visually. This strategy

builds on CCD's work to contextualize the English and reading curriculum. Teachers have also observed that this method increases the level of student engagement.

English/Reading Redesign Challenges

Accelerated Pace. During our site visit interviews, a number of students expressed their satisfaction with being able to proceed more quickly through the DE sequence by taking accelerated or compressed courses. These classes are also less expensive for them. One student did note, however, that he had multiple essays to complete and did not always get feedback on his turned-in assignments before the next one was due. This hampered his ability to learn from prior mistakes. It is not clear at this point if he was alone in this experience or if other students in multiple classes had the same issue.

Heavy Workload. Several students commented on the heavy workload in the redesigned classes, especially those taking more than one redesigned course and/or upper-level classes.

Faculty and staff "buy-in." Some CCD faculty members are reticent to combine courses because they feel the disciplines lose their depth. It has also been difficult getting people trained for NROC in time to teach classes with it. This lack of lead time gives instructors the feeling of having been "thrown into" teaching this way.

Math Redesign

Between Spring 2012 and Spring 2013, 916 students took redesigned math courses. As with the English and reading redesign, the redesigned math courses were developed to speed student progress through the DE math sequence, increase student retention, and build the math skills necessary for career success.

Math Redesign Innovative Models and Practice

Increased Flexibility. CCD's redesigned math classes in this phase were compressed and used NROC. This compressed model allowed students to choose the NROC labs and online components that best suited their individual learning needs. For example, students who required additional material to learn a specific content area could add online labs, while those who required less time and fewer materials could move forward more quickly. Students had access to the class instructor and the NROC lab leader. They could do some or all work at home, which is a real benefit for those balancing work and/or family responsibilities with their college studies.

Increased Engagement with Students. CCD faculty and staff noted that the use of math labs and online components allows them to better track student activity and progress. CCD's lab leader checks the online course space every morning to see which students logged on the day before and identifies those who have not. Students who do not regularly log in are sent emails to

"nudge" them to return to the course space and log in more frequently or to come in to see the lab leader for help.

Students with questions or who need assistance can reach their math instructor in three ways: during regular instruction, online through NROC, or by requesting special help after class. In this regard, the lab leader observed that some NROC students have learning disabilities and need additional help to be successful.

CCD also provides a range of support services to students. For example, the college informs students that they can work on skill areas prior to sitting for the Accuplacer test. Taking a refresher course is one way to do this. The school also helps out with diagnostics and practice exams aimed at improving student skills and self-confidence.

Finally, also as with English and reading, students in the paired math learning community courses reported benefiting from the opportunity to better understand the concepts taught in the class through discussions with each other.

<u>Math Redesign Challenges</u>

As with English and reading, some students were concerned about the faster pace and greater workload associated with the redesigned math classes. The fear of not being able to keep up is a primary factor in keeping students eligible for redesigned math courses from taking them.

Another issue with students involves the technology used in the redesigned classes. The online aspects of the courses require an additional competency and force some to shift their learning style from oral to visual. For nontraditional students who may not be computer literate or for students with limited Internet access, making use of the online components can be difficult. Consequently, these students have shown some reticence in enrolling in redesigned courses that use flipped classrooms or the NROC.

Redesigned Course Outcomes

In 2006-2007, CCD compressed a number of its developmental courses with the goal of helping students move more quickly through the DE sequence. It combined Math 030 and 060, for example, and Math 060 and 090. The college also combined English and reading (something the State Task Force directed all colleges to do in 2013). The school also began contextualizing course content. In subsequent years, CCD faculty developed learning communities that linked a developmental math or English/reading course to a humanities, social science, or science course.

In addition, in 2010, CCD began to ramp up the learning community model by having paired courses co-taught by remedial education faculty and the faculty from the different disciplines. The college also piloted combining Math 060 or 090 with English 090. This learning community

was very successful and was offered until Spring 2013. Concurrent with these course offerings, CCD offered the more traditional sequence of developmental courses.

Under the COETC grant, between Spring 2012 and Spring 2013, CCD offered 17 unique restructured or redesigned courses in 158[1] unique sections. Approximately 39 percent of all CCD students enrolled in redesigned DE courses were enrolled in the spring 2013 semester. Table 1 displays the rollout of CCD's course offerings by term along with the number and percentage of total students (3,049 students, 1,463 of whom are unique students) served by the courses each term.

Table 1. CCD Students Enrolled in DE Redesigned Courses by Term		
Term and Year	Percentage of Total Redesigned DE Population (All Subjects)	Number of Students (Redesigned DE Population)
Spring 2012	23.2	708
Fall 2012	37.7	1,148
Spring 2013	39.1	1,193
Total	100	3,049

In terms of overall student retention, 2,780 students (91.2 percent) who registered for redesigned DE courses persisted in the course, while 100 (3.3 percent) dropped the course during the add/drop period and 169 (5.5 percent) withdrew after the term started.

Table 2 presents the number of students enrolled in redesigned DE by subject. At CCD, 38.5 percent of students served by redesigned DE courses were enrolled in English, 30 percent in math, 19.7 percent in reading, and 11.7 percent in DE contextualized courses.

Table 2. Enrollments in CCD DE Redesigned Course Offerings by Subject		
Subject	Percentage of Total Redesigned DE Population (All Terms)	Number of Students (Redesigned DE Population)
English	38.5	1175
Reading	19.7	601
DE Contextualized	11.7	357
Math	30.0	916
Total	100.0	3,049

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[1] Two redesigned course were validated by the project lead (CRNs 32767 and 32605) but were not included in this analysis. We have do not know the reason for this as yet but have sent an inquiry to the project lead. Both of these courses are part of pairings: 32723 is paired with 32767 and 32605 with 32893 and 32880. CRNs 32723 and 32893 and 32880 are included in the analysis.

Tables 3 shows the number of students at CCD enrolled in redesigned DE by course title, including subject matter courses linked to remedial courses.

Table 3. Enrollment in CCD DE Redesigned Course Offerings by Course Title		
Course Title	Percentage of Total Redesigned DE Population (All Terms)	Number of Students (Redesigned DE Population)
Advanced Academic Achievement	0.6	18
Writing Fundamentals	6.3	193
Basic Composition	23.6	719
English Composition I : CO1	8.6	263
Foundations of Reading	6.7	204
College Preparatory Reading	13.0	397
Pre-Algebra	7.7	234
Introductory Algebra	15.8	481
Intermediate Algebra	3.0	90
Special Topics in Math	3.6	111
Gen College Biology I/Lab: SC1	0.8	24
General Psychology I: SS3	2.0	62
Intro to Criminal Justice	0.9	28
Intro to Literature I : AH2	1.1	34
American Government : SS1	1.3	39
Art Appreciation : AH1	1.9	58
Public Speaking	3.1	94
Total	100.0	3,049

Table 4 presents the mean of grades for each individual DE redesigned and linked subject matter course. In the months ahead, the Rutgers team will do further analysis of means, comparing section means to departmental means.

Table 4. CCD Academic Outcomes for Redesigned DE Courses	
Course Title	Course Mean Grade (All Terms and Redesigned Sections Combined)
Advanced Academic Achievement	2.7500
Writing Fundamentals	2.9282
Basic Composition	3.0808
English Composition I : CO1	3.1403
Foundations of Reading	3.2688
College Preparatory Reading	3.2237
Pre-Algebra	2.8830
Introductory Algebra	2.8078
Intermediate Algebra	3.0278
Special Topics in Math	2.3853
Gen College Biology I/Lab: SC1	2.3913
General Psychology I: SS3	2.2075
Intro to Criminal Justice	2.0417
Intro to Literature I : AH2	1.7742
Art Appreciation : AH1	2.4792
American Government : SS1	1.9722
Public Speaking	2.5862

CCD'S CAREER COACHING PROGRAM

Under the COETC grant, the career coach position is meant to facilitate student access to careers in the energy sector and to assist students with any academic and non-academic issues that inhibit their progress or ability to complete a course of study. The coaching functions were envisioned to include career counseling and referrals, academic advising related to career choices, and counseling and referrals for a wide range of social and financial support services. To conform to the COETC's intent, eligibility for career coach services requires students to be participating in a redesigned DE course or a TAACCCT-supported energy course/program, to have Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) eligibility (or be TAA-like), to be unemployed, and/or to be eligible for other U.S. Department of Labor programs.

All colleges involved in the grant, including CCD, have experienced a lack of clarity regarding the career coach's role and activities.

Historically, CCD offers a range of advising services on campus, including FastStart "program advisers," academic advisers, Denver Scholarship Foundation (DSF) advisers, and career planning advisers. The COETC career coach was added to this mix of services, which caused a good deal of confusion. For instance, CCD's FastStart advisers provide intensive intentional advisement focused on helping FastStart students succeed in their college careers. FastStart advising provides academic as well as other support and referral services as needed by students. The job functions of the FastStart program adviser and career coach therefore overlap, as does the target population of students enrolled in the DE sequence.

In addition to this issue, CCD has a well-defined career services department which is separate from the academic advising department. Which means students see different counselors for academic and career assessments, services, and/or community referrals.

Defining the COETC career coach's role and her caseload has thus been a significant challenge for CCD faculty and staff and for the career coach, who arrived in late August 2012.

In particular, the career coach has had difficulty identifying a caseload that fits the COETC project parameters, that is, "where [her] caseload is coming from and what exactly [she is] doing." As a former employee at a regional workforce center, the coach had envisioned her CCD role as being similar to that of a workforce development case manager. In other words, she would be doing one-on-one in-depth career counseling with students while maintaining a collaborative relationship with the workforce center. But this has not been the case.

CCD already has an active career center with two full-time staff members who work closely with the workforce center. As a result, there has been some duplication of effort as well as confusion over the coach's role with respect to the workforce center. To make matters more challenging, the workforce center case managers believe that assessment and counseling of Workforce Investment Act (WIA)/TAA students should be done at the center and not at CCD by the career coach. CCD's coach has reported that her history of workforce development and the attendant associations with the career development council and the state has helped her navigate this issue. Still, the territorial competition has added to the obstacles she faces in providing effective career coaching services.

In an effort to situate her role within the CCD service system, the coach reached out to coaches at other COETC consortium colleges to learn how they navigate their respective institutional organizations and build student caseloads. After her discussion with them, she realized that CCD's size and the structure of its student services made her situation unique.

Nevertheless, the career coach has tried a number of strategies to recruit students and encourage their participation in intensive advising. She created a flyer to introduce students to the career coach services. She did presentations in DE classes for the same purpose, telling them "If you are having any problems, or anything is affecting your ability to succeed in class, come see me." In the end, the career coach found that in most cases classroom presentations were

ineffective for building caseload. They were helpful, however, in educating faculty members regarding her services, which resulted in her gaining some students through faculty referrals. She also has found that sending emails to students flagged in Banner has been more effective than the presentations for her recruiting efforts. In addition, she has learned that using goal-oriented terminology helps recruit students for her caseload.

When she first came to CCD, the career coach was placed in the office of academic advisement and assigned to be one of the many advisers there who see walk-in students. The majority of these contacts involved single sessions with individuals. Not all of these were "eligible" under the grant to be part of her caseload. Beginning Fall 2013, CCD assigned the coach to work only with students in redesigned DE courses and/or those who are TAA-eligible or TAA-like.

CCD's Electronic Student Case Files and Career Coaching Targets

As mentioned above, ESCFs help career coaches track student progress with goals. Rutgers hopes that TSJC's ESCF data will help it better understand student challenges and best intervention practices, as well as the impact of coaching services on student retention and completion rates.

The career coach creates an ESCF for each student when they first meet and then inputs additional information from subsequent visits and interactions. As of May 23, 2013, CCD's career coach had registered 538 students in the ESCF system.[2] This was 69 percent of the total number of students (780) targeted for career coaching under the grant. Of the 538 students with ESCF files, 521 (96.8 percent) had active files as of May 23, 2013.[3]

CCD's Career Coaching Eligibility Distribution

As stated above, to be eligible for coaching services a student must be enrolled in a redesigned DE course supported by the COETC grant, eligible for TAA assistance, unemployed, or underemployed. Table 4 shows the distribution at CCD of students registered by the career coach as of Spring 2013 and cumulatively as of September 30, 2013. In May 2013, 58.4 percent of the registered students had unknown eligibility. Four months later, more students had been registered and the eligibility was known for many more. Yet, as of September 30, more than a quarter of registered students still lacked an identified eligibility category.

Of the students whose eligibility was documented as of September 30 (648), the majority (60 percent) were enrolled in redesigned DE classes. Only 0.7 percent were eligible by virtue of their

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[2] Students registered by the career coach may not have an active ESCF file. In order for the student to be considered registered, the career coach has to fill in basic information such as ID number and name but does not have to initiate an ESCF file. Alternatively, a student in this count may have been served by the career coach and the student's ESCF submitted. Such ESCFs are considered inactive.

[3] Rutgers defines an active ESCF file as a "response in progress" in which student information has been entered into the ESCF but not submitted to the record. Career coaches can return to and update information in active ESCFs. An ESCF that has been closed or submitted to the system by the career coach is considered inactive.

TAA status. In the months ahead, it will be important to compare these percentages to CCD's entire student population to be sure the coaching services are reaching as many TAA-eligible students as possible.

As noted above, the ESCF was created to capture the details of the services provided by career coaches, including the nature of student issues and the strategies coaches employed, such as referrals, to assist students. Despite registering students, many career coaches have not used the ESCF to record their work with students. This makes it very difficult to assess what the coaches have accomplished for individual students as well as their overall effect on student retention and completion rates. As of May 2013, this is the situation at CCD. The career coach has recorded demographic and academic information in the ESCF but made very few entries regarding student goals or issues or what interventions have taken place.

SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

Test Prep for Accuplacer

CCD has used NROC to help students prepare for the Accuplacer exams. Students take practice tests and if they are displeased with the scores or want to improve skills, they can pay a fee to build skills using NROC materials. The test prep lab is informal and noncredit. New students must attend a session in the lab to learn the full scope of the Accuplacer and how the scores affect their academic pathway. CCD charges students $60 per semester for use of the NROC lab.

Intensive Academic Achievement Course

CCD has offered AAA 101 as an intensive course the week before classes start. The college found that student attendance and retention in the course under this schedule is better than when it was offered once per week for 12 weeks during the semester. Only one or two students per pre-semester course did not complete AAA 101 compared to a 50-percent dropout rate for the traditional 12-week course.

FastStart

The State Task Force DE models are now in place at CCD and so FastStart courses are no longer offered. However, it is important to note that students found FastStart to be of significant value. They liked having the option of combined classes and being able to accelerate through the DE sequence. FastStart saved them money and time. They also reported being able to self-pace was very helpful and gave extremely positive feedback about learning communities and the opportunities they provided for peer interaction. The co-teaching system was also popular among CCD students.

Flexibility

The combination of the NROC lab and online learning environment gives students the ability to work at home, which benefits students who work full-time or at odd hours or have family or other commitments outside of school. Additionally, the lab's low cost allows individuals who are not yet students to brush up their skills or to test them against the levels required for college classes. Students also appreciate the no-cost materials option of working with NROC, which eliminates the need to pay $100 or more for a math textbook.

English/Math Combination

Faculty noted the success of the English and math combined course. Instructors were able to contextualize the material such that concepts from both curriculums crossed over. For example, students learned to apply grammar skills learned in English to their algebra problems.

Faculty also discussed how communities form within courses and foster student peer support. In addition, students who excelled in different subject matter areas in the linked courses emerged as peer mentors who could add to help already available from the instructors. Students also reported that the intensity of the leaning community helps reduce the isolation they have typically experienced when they move from class to class.

Faculty Development via Peer Observations

Faculty reported that observing each other and providing feedback has been helpful in developing current, new, and prospective faculty to teach redesigned courses. These peer observation visits and the debriefing sessions that follow afford faculty members opportunities to witness new teaching strategies in real time with students present and then translate the ideas and pedagogy into their own practices.

Career Coach Consortium Communication

CCD's career coach noted that her communications with career coaches at other colleges have been beneficial as the coaches develop working relationships and share successful practices and procedures.

Use of Goal-Oriented Advising

The career coach also found that direct referral of students by other advisers or faculty members is the most successful way to initiate contact with students. In addition, she learned from her interactions that students respond better to goal-oriented counseling that focuses on achieving their personal career goals rather than solving problems. Accordingly, she modified the ESCF system to accommodate information on student goals. She collects this information for input through a form she distributes to students.

SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES

Developmental Education Options

Given CCD's capacity to offer traditional and redesigned DE courses, some concerns have emerged over students not always being advised about the advantages and, for some students, disadvantages of enrolling in a FastStart or accelerated DE course. In addition, some students are wary of "acceleration." Without sufficient support from advisers, students who may be well served by FastStart or other accelerated courses sometimes do not register for them.

Technical Problems

Two technology-related issues are of note here. First, a glitch with the NROC program has prevented Metro students from logging in because, even though they are in an NROC online class, they are not technically CCD students. Second, the career coach has found learning the advising software and the Banner system to be challenging.

Career Coach Services

CCD provides a large range of student support services. This rich array of student support services, which existed before the COETC grant, has made the career coaching services redundant in many respects. This kind of overlap has occurred at other large COETC consortium colleges as well. Another issue is that all advisers at the college must report the number of students they serve to their funding sources. This results in competition for students to meet project targets. As one person noted, many advisers are overloaded with students but unwilling to refer students elsewhere and risk decreasing their numbers. Maintaining high numbers often equates to keeping their jobs. Also, while the career coach may reach her target number of students served given CCD's large DE student population, she may not be providing the intentional advising that is meant to be the essence of the position.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CCD

Redesigns under COETC

CCD redesigned DE courses well before the COETC grant began. For this reason, it is difficult to ascertain what successes and challenges relate directly to the grant. As the project progresses, it would be beneficial for CCD to clearly delineate what elements of the redesigned courses came into being after the grant began and before the State Task Force models were implemented.

Career Coach Position

Moving forward under the new State Task Force models may help CCD clarify the career coach's role. This clarity must be spread across the college to integrate her position with existing services with minimum overlap and maximum effectiveness.

Marketing New Programs

With FastStart, some students were initially reticent or fearful about enrolling in an accelerated course or a course linked with a subject matter course. Later, however, they discovered this to be a very positive experience. While FastStart no longer exists at CCD (only the state models will be offered now), it may be helpful to future endeavors to use students as ambassadors for new programs. Student can share their "success stories" with accelerated and/or linked courses to help other students feel less anxious about registering for them.