

El Camino College Learning Communities Program Outcomes Fall 2005-Fall 2009

Students at El Camino College have the opportunity to participate in learning communities. In learning communities, the subject matter of two or more classes is integrated and may be designed around a unifying theme to reinforce students' learning. Students engage with the same group of students for more than one class period which encourages students supporting each other through the curriculum. Faculty also spend more time with the students and emphasize goals for academic success.

The purpose of this study is to track learning community participants from their initial participation terms to compare their academic outcomes with non-participants.

Students in the learning communities were divided into five fall cohorts. The cohorts are as follows: Fall 2005 (n=247), Fall 2006 (n= 119), Fall 2007 (n=48), Fall 2008 (n=188), and Fall 2009 (n=268). Each cohort was compared to a control group of students who took the same courses as learning community students in the fall terms but were not enrolled in a learning community.

The following is a summary of the demographic and enrollment characteristics of learning community students and the control groups for each of the five cohorts. Pages 2 through 8 provide more detailed information and analysis by topic.

Learning Communities

Category	Characteristic	Fall 2005 Cohort		Fall 2006 Cohort		Fall 2007 Cohort*		Fall 2008 Cohort		Fall 2009 Cohort	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
All Students		247	100%	119	100%	48	100%	188	100%	268	100%
Gender	Female	135	54.7%	73	61.3%	25	52.1%	98	52.1%	126	47.0%
	Male	112	45.3%	46	38.7%	23	47.9%	90	47.9%	142	53.0%
Ethnicity	African-American	54	21.9%	29	24.4%	9	18.8%	34	18.1%	47	17.5%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	40	16.1%	19	15.9%	13	27.1%	25	13.3%	42	15.7%
	Latino	97	39.3%	54	45.4%	17	35.4%	91	48.4%	123	45.9%
	White	34	13.8%	10	8.4%	6	12.5%	20	10.6%	37	13.8%
	Two or more races	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	3.0%
	Unknown or Declined	22	8.9%	7	5.9%	3	6.3%	18	9.6%	11	4.1%
Educational Goals	Basic Skills/GED	15	6.1%	0	0.0%	0		5	2.7%	11	4.1%
	Degree/Certif. Only	9	3.6%	6	5.0%	2	4.2%	5	2.7%	15	5.6%
	Enrichment	2	0.8%	2	1.7%	1	2.1%	6	3.2%	7	2.6%
	Intend to Transfer	94	38.1%	43	36.1%	22	45.8%	65	34.6%	84	31.3%
	Retrain/recertif.	20	8.1%	3	2.5%	2	4.2%	4	2.1%	7	2.6%
	Undecided	91	36.8%	48	40.3%	12	25.0%	36	19.1%	35	13.1%
	Unknown	16	6.5%	17	14.3%	9	18.8%	67	35.6%	109	40.7%
Enrollment Level	Full-Time	78	31.7%	65	54.6%	34	70.8%	151	86.8%	141	52.6%
	Part time	168	68.3%	54	45.4%	14	29.2%	23	13.2%	127	47.4%
Unit Load	Average	9.86		11.32		12.28		11.48		11.34	

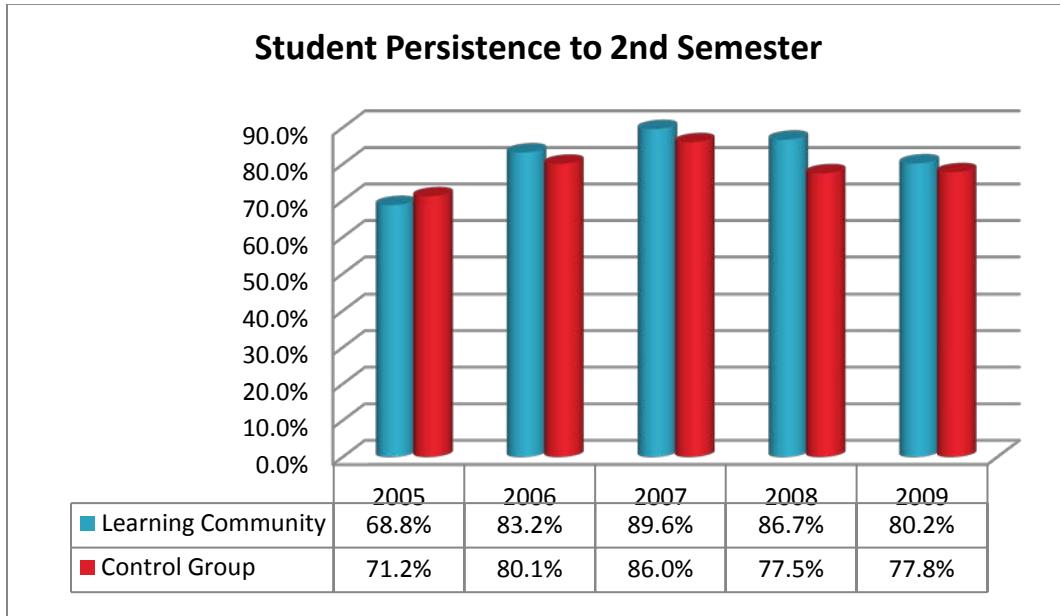
*Only 2 Learning Community sections offered in term.

Control Group

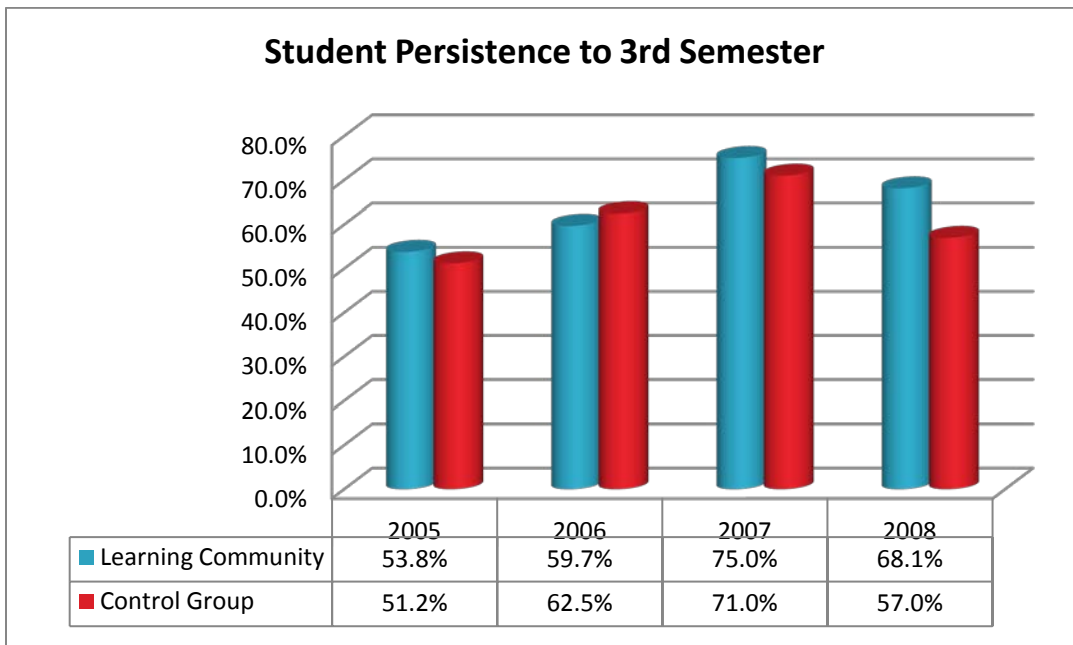
Category	Characteristic	Fall 2005 Cohort		Fall 2006 Cohort		Fall 2007 Cohort		Fall 2008 Cohort		Fall 2009 Cohort	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
All Students		250	100%	120	100%	100	100%	200	100%	270	100%
Gender	Female	148	59.2%	71	59.2%	56	56.0%	115	57.5%	139	51.5%
	Male	102	40.8%	49	40.8%	44	44.0%	85	42.5%	131	48.5%
Ethnicity	African-American	62	24.8%	32	26.7%	19	19.0%	48	24.0%	43	15.9%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	39	15.6%	12	10.0%	16	16.0%	34	17.0%	50	18.5%
	Latino	96	38.4%	47	39.2%	38	38.0%	84	42.0%	109	40.4%
	White	38	15.2%	17	14.2%	17	17.0%	18	9.0%	35	13.0%
	Two or more races	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	10	3.7%
	Unknown or Declined	15	6.0%	12	10.0%	10	10.0%	15	7.5%	21	7.8%
Educational Goals	Basic Skills/GED	13	5.2%	4	3.3%	4	4.0%	5	2.5%	8	3.0%
	Degree/Certif. Only	10	4.0%	8	6.7%	2	2.0%	5	2.5%	5	1.9%
	Enrichment	3	1.2%	5	4.2%	1	1.0%	4	2.0%	9	3.3%
	Intend to Transfer	114	45.6%	50	41.7%	38	38.0%	79	39.5%	78	28.9%
	Retrain/recertif.	17	6.8%	3	2.5%	6	6.0%	4	2.0%	12	4.4%
	Undecided	65	26.0%	32	26.7%	37	37.0%	46	23.0%	49	18.1%
	Unknown	28	11.2%	18	15.0%	12	12.0%	57	28.5%	109	40.4%
Enrollment Level	Full-Time	84	33.7%	57	47.5%	46	46.0%	74	37.0%	136	50.4%
	Part time	165	66.3%	63	52.5%	54	54.0%	126	63.0%	134	49.6%
Unit Load	Average	9.36		10.54		10.47		10.19		10.56	

Persistence

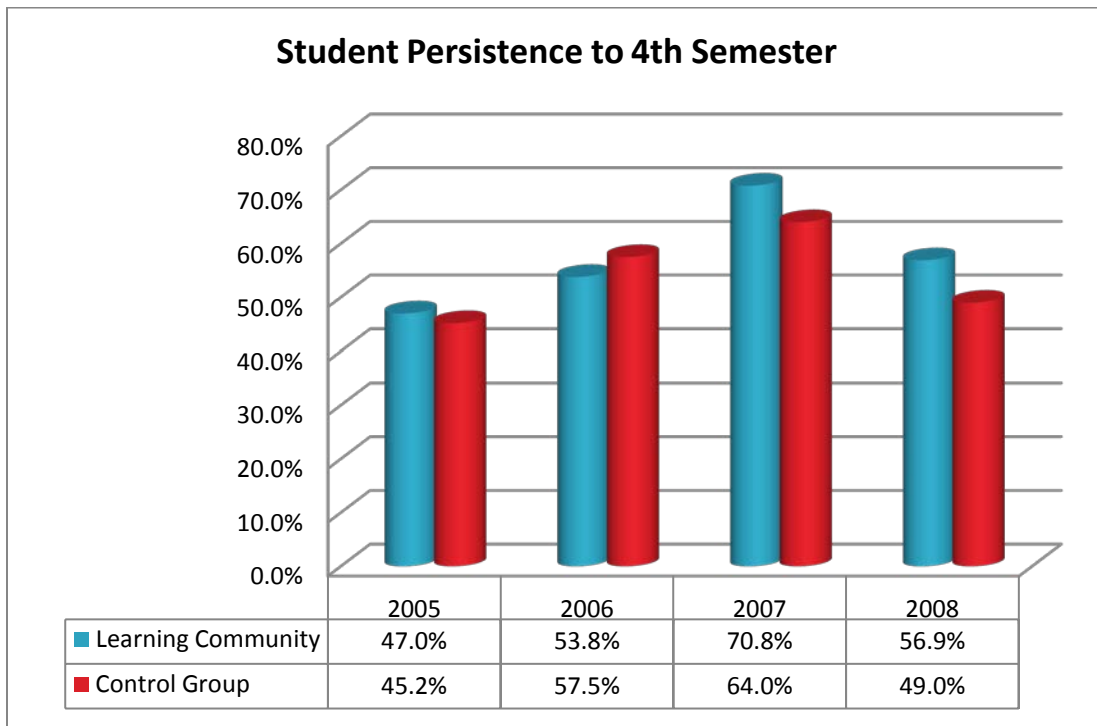
Students in learning communities demonstrate higher persistence rates than their comparison group. On average, learning community students persist to their 2nd semester at a rate of 82%. For the control group, the average persistence rate is 79%.



The 3rd semester persistence rate for the learning community cohort has increased in recent years. The fall 2005 cohort had a 3rd semester persistence rate of 54% while the fall 2008 cohort rate was 14 points higher at 68%. The control groups had an average persistence rate of 60%



The 4th semester persistence rate for learning community cohorts has also increased in recent years. The fall 2005 cohort had a 4th semester persistence rate of 47% while the fall 2008 cohort rate was 10 points higher at 57%. The control groups had an average persistence rate of 54%.

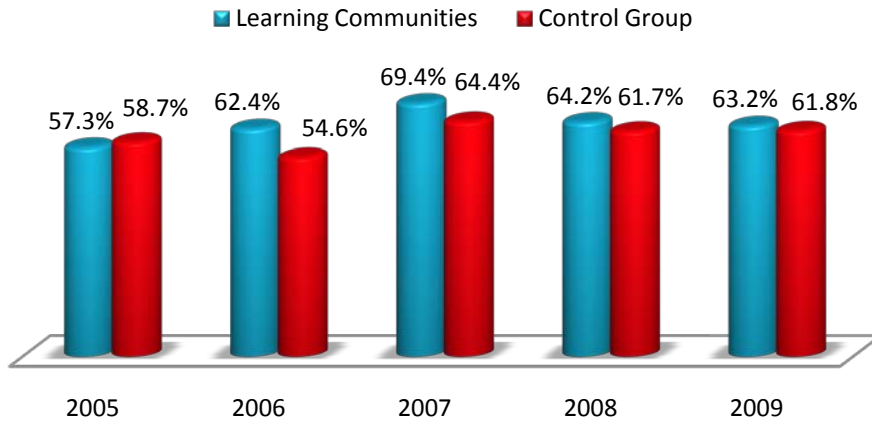


Overall Success and Retention

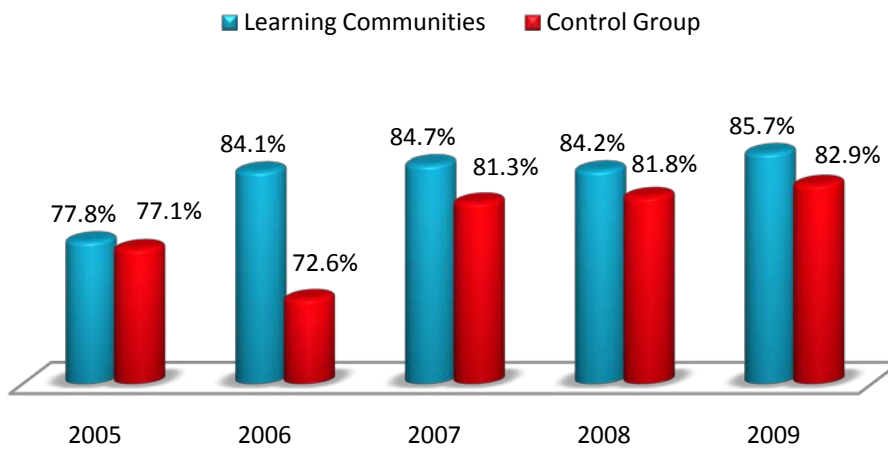
Student academic performance was measured in two ways: student *retention* (completing a course, regardless of final grade) and *success* (completing a course with a C/CR or better).

Students in learning communities were retained at an average rate of 83%. Students in the control groups were retained at a rate of 79%. Term success rates have remained relatively stable for the learning community cohorts. Learning community cohorts had an average success rate of 63% which is 3 points higher than the control groups' rate of 60%.

Success Rates



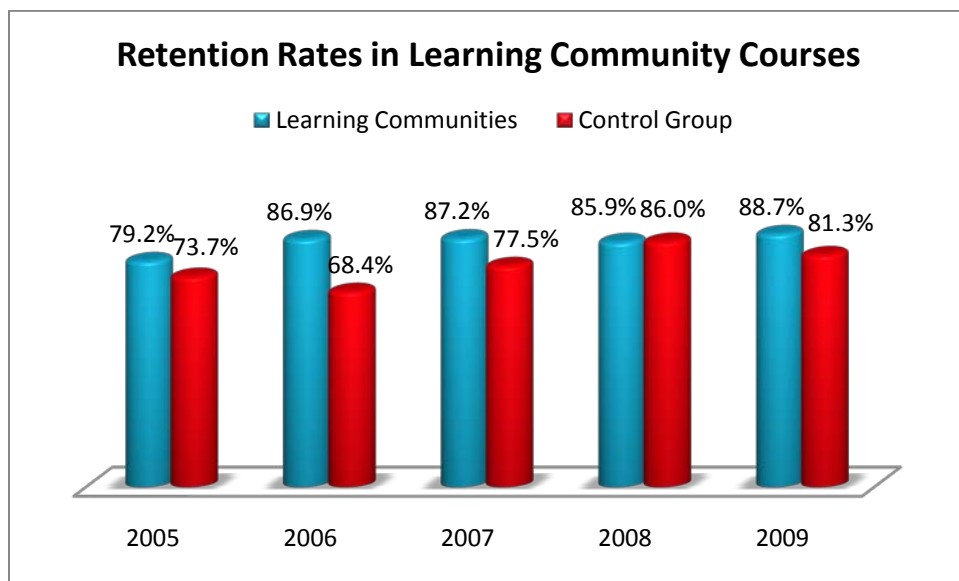
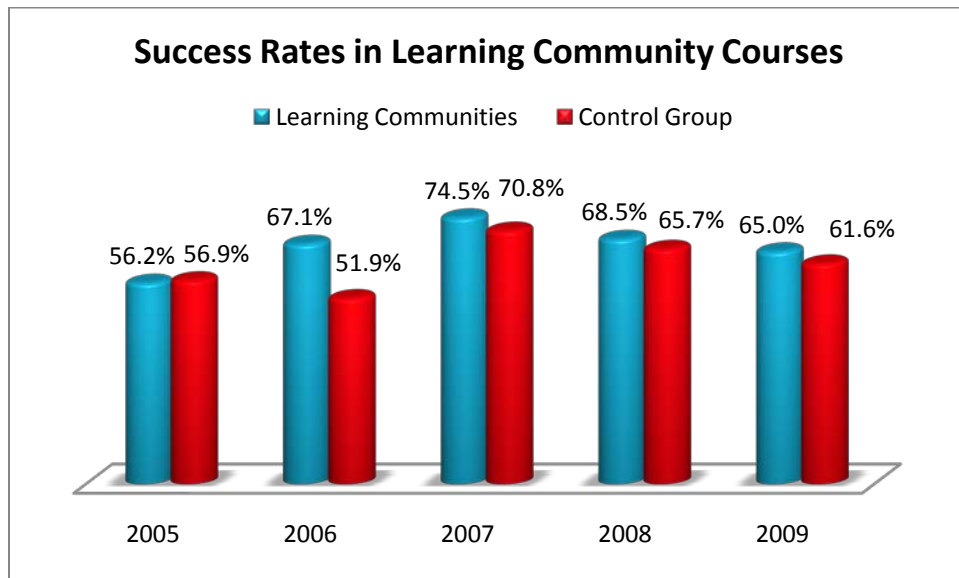
Retention Rates



Learning Community Courses Success and Retention

Success and retention rates were calculated for the learning community courses taken during the fall terms. The learning community cohorts demonstrate high retention rates in these courses. The average retention rate for the learning community cohorts is 86%, 9 points higher than the control groups' rate of 77%.

Success rates in learning community courses have gradually increased for the learning community cohorts. The fall 2005 cohort had a success rate of 56%. The fall 2009 cohort success rate was 9 points higher at 65%. The control group had an average success rate of 61%.



Conclusion

The learning community cohorts' persistence, success and retention rates have gradually increased over time. The learning community cohorts also demonstrate healthy overall persistence rates and high retention rates in learning community courses. Overall, students in learning communities performed better in all measures when compared to students who took the same courses outside of learning communities.