

**Discussion of Preliminary Results for Learning Communities Study**  
**January 18, 2006**  
**Office of Research and Planning**

**Draft – For Discussion Only**

**Introduction and Methodology**

In early December, 2006, Jim Allen of the QIP #6A team met with Harlan Schweer and Tom Schrader of Research and Planning to implement a research study investigating the relationship between student participation in “learning community” classes and engagement in their school work at the College of DuPage.

Research and Planning, in conjunction with Jim Allen and the QIP #6A team, developed two nearly identical surveys designed to measure their engagement in their school work based on the CCSSE model. The first form of the survey was distributed to students in classes that were taught using the “learning community” model (the experimental group) and the second form was distributed to students in otherwise similar classes that used the traditional model of teaching (comparison group).

Jim Allen selected a non-random sample of classes (both learning community and traditional) to be surveyed. Where possible, learning community classes were matched with traditional classes in the same discipline and taught by the same instructor in order to better facilitate comparisons. Additional surveys were sent to other non-learning community classes taught by other instructors in an attempt to control for instructor effects.

Surveys were administered in the class during regular class times. The surveys were pre-coded to identify respondents from learning community vs. non-learning community and honors vs. non-honors classes (sample surveys are included in the Appendix). Completed surveys were returned to Research and Planning for scanning and analysis. The following sections summarize the preliminary findings of the study. Eighty-eight surveys were returned from learning community courses, 167 were returned from non-learning community courses from the original sample, and 200 were returned from non-learning community courses from the supplemental sample.

## **Results and Discussion**

Students responding to the survey from the learning communities classes scored better on all 14 “engagement” items included on the survey than did students in the non-learning communities classes (see Tables 1 & 2 in the Appendix for details).

These results tend to support the hypothesis that participation in learning community classes leads to higher levels of engagement among students.

While data was collected in order to distinguish differences between Honors and non-Honors courses, not enough responses were received from Honors course takers to make meaningful comparisons.

Also students responding from learning community classes rated the quality of their relationships with both their fellow students and their instructors higher than did students from non-learning community classes (see Table 3 in the Appendix for details).

Various demographic data was collected as well and will be used in more detailed future analysis of the results of this study.

# Appendix

**Table 1 - Results of Learning Community Survey – Engagement Questions  
Experimental (LC classes) vs. Control (non-LC classes from original distribution list) vs.  
CCSSE results**

Survey Item	Learning Community Class Mean Results* (n=88)	Non- Learning Community Class Mean Results* (n=167)	2006 CCSSE Mean Results for College of DuPage* (n=1,311)
1. Asked questions or contributed to discussions during this class.	3.19	2.73	2.86
2. Made a presentation in this class.	2.73	2.06	2.23
3. Came to this class unprepared (without completing readings or assignments). <i>*Lower score is better.</i>	1.77	1.81	2.01
4. Worked with classmates on projects during class time.	2.59	2.45	2.39
5. Worked with classmates outside of class on class projects or assignments.	2.09	1.77	1.80
6. Participated in a community-based project as part of this class.	1.90	1.56	1.32
7. Used the Internet or instant messaging to work on an assignment for this class.	2.83	2.42	2.83
8. Used e-mail to communicate with the instructor for this class.	2.27	2.16	2.60
9. Discussed grades or assignments with your instructor.	2.35	2.27	2.50
10. Discussed career plans with an advisor or instructor.	2.06	1.91	2.00
11. Discussed ideas from your readings or class with your instructor outside of this class.	2.10	1.77	1.76
12. Worked with your instructor on activities other than coursework for this class.	1.91	1.51	1.43
13. Discussed ideas from your readings or class with others outside of this class.	2.60	2.08	2.46
14. Had serious conversations with students who differ from you.	2.49	2.07	2.37

\*on a 4-point scale where 4 = Very Often, 3 = Often, 2 = Sometimes, and 1 = Never

Means from similar items from the 2006 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) are included for comparison purposes.

**Table 2 - Results of Learning Community Survey – Engagement Questions  
Experimental (LC classes) vs. Control (all non-LC classes) vs. CCSSE results**

	Learning	Non-	2006
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<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Community Class Mean Results* (n=88)</b>	<b>Learning Community Class Mean Results* (n=367)</b>	<b>CCSSE Mean Results for College of DuPage* (n=1,311)</b>
<b>1. Asked questions of contributed to discussions during this class.</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>2.86</b>
<b>2. Made a presentation in this class.</b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>1.84</b>	<b>2.23</b>
<b>3. Came to this class unprepared (without completing readings or assignments).</b>	<b>1.77</b>	<b>1.76</b>	<b>2.01</b>
<b>4. Worked with classmates on projects during class time.</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>2.41</b>	<b>2.39</b>
<b>5. Worked with classmates outside of class on class projects or assignments.</b>	<b>2.09</b>	<b>1.80</b>	<b>1.80</b>
<b>6. Participated in a community-based project as part of this class.</b>	<b>1.90</b>	<b>1.45</b>	<b>1.32</b>
<b>7. Used the Internet or instant messaging to work on an assignment for this class.</b>	<b>2.83</b>	<b>2.26</b>	<b>2.83</b>
<b>8. Used e-mail to communicate with the instructor for this class.</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>2.12</b>	<b>2.60</b>
<b>9. Discussed grades or assignments with your instructor.</b>	<b>2.35</b>	<b>2.25</b>	<b>2.50</b>
<b>10. Discussed career plans with an advisor or instructor.</b>	<b>2.06</b>	<b>1.89</b>	<b>2.00</b>
<b>11. Discussed ideas from your readings or class with your instructor outside of this class.</b>	<b>2.10</b>	<b>1.71</b>	<b>1.76</b>
<b>12. Worked with your instructor on activities other than coursework for this class.</b>	<b>1.91</b>	<b>1.44</b>	<b>1.43</b>
<b>13. Discussed ideas from your readings or class with others outside of this class.</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>2.20</b>	<b>2.46</b>
<b>14. Had serious conversations with students who differ from you.</b>	<b>2.49</b>	<b>2.08</b>	<b>2.37</b>

\*on a 4-point scale where 4 = Very Often, 3 = Often, 2 = Sometimes, and 1 = Never

Means from similar items from the 2006 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) are included for comparison purposes.

**Table 3 – Results of Learning Community Survey  
Relationship with Other Students and Instructor**

Survey Item	Mean response from learning community respondents (n=88)	Mean response from non- learning community respondents (n=167)
<b>15. In this class, how would you rate the quality of your relationship with other students in the class?</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>3.17</b>
<b>16. In this class, how would you rate the quality of your relationship with your instructor?</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>3.25</b>
	(n=88)	(n=367)
<b>15. In this class, how would you rate the quality of your relationship with other students in the class?</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>3.14</b>
<b>16. In this class, how would you rate the quality of your relationship with your instructor?</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>3.13</b>

# Learning Communities Survey

This survey is designed to gather information regarding learning community classes at College of DuPage. Your responses will help guide College decision-makers in enhancing the learning experience for you and your fellow students in this and other learning community classes. Thank you for your participation!

**Directions:** For each of the following items, darken the circle that corresponds to your answer. Please use black or blue ink to complete this survey.

For items 1 through 14, how often have you done each of the described activities during this class at College of DuPage?

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
1. Asked questions or contributed to discussions during this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Made a presentation in this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Came to this class unprepared (without completing readings or assignments).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Worked with classmates on projects during class time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Worked with classmates outside of class on class projects or assignments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Participated in a community-based project as part of this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Used the Internet or instant messaging to work on an assignment for this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Used e-mail to communicate with the instructor for this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Discussed grades or assignments with your instructor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Discussed career plans with an advisor or an instructor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Discussed ideas from your readings or class with your instructor outside of this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Worked with your instructor on activities other than coursework for this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Discussed ideas from your readings or class with others (fellow students, coworkers, family, etc.) outside of this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Had serious conversations with students who differ from you.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. In this class, how would you rate the quality of your relationships with other students in the class?

Very good     
  Good     
  Fair     
  Poor

16. In this class, how would you rate the quality of your relationships with your instructors?

Very good     
  Good     
  Fair     
  Poor

*Continued on reverse side*

**Office Use Only -**

LC-H1

NLC-H2

LC-NH3

NLC-NH4

**Background Questions**

**17. How many terms (including the current term) have you been enrolled at College of DuPage?**

- One       Two       Three       Four or more

**18. Have you ever been a member of a learning community class before?**

- Yes       No       Don't Know

If "Yes" to Item 18, please write the name of the class here: \_\_\_\_\_

**19. Have you ever taken classes at a college other than College of DuPage?**

- Yes       No

**20. What is your age?**

- 17 or younger       18 – 20       21- 24       25 – 39       40 – 54       55 or older

**21. What is your gender?**

- Male       Female

**22. Do you usually attend C.O.D. on a full-time or part-time basis?**

- Full-time (12 or more semester hours)       Part-time (less than 12 semester hours)

**23. Are you usually employed?**

- Full-time       Part-time       I'm not employed

**24. What is the major reason you are attending College of DuPage?**

- Complete a certificate program       Obtain an associate degree       Transfer to a 4-year college or university       Obtain or update job-related skills       Self improvement/ personal enjoyment       Change careers

**Comments?** \_\_\_\_\_

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*THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!  
Please return it to your Instructor*

# Class Engagement Survey

This survey is designed to gather information regarding ways students are engaged in classes at College of DuPage. Your responses will help guide College decision-makers in enhancing the learning experience for you and your fellow students at College of DuPage. Thank you for your participation!

**Directions:** For each of the following items, darken the circle that corresponds to your answer. Please use black or blue ink to complete this survey.

For items 1 through 14, how often have you done each of the described activities during this class at College of DuPage?

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
1. Asked questions or contributed to discussions during this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Made a presentation in this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Came to this class unprepared (without completing readings or assignments).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Worked with classmates on projects during class time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Worked with classmates outside of class on class projects or assignments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Participated in a community-based project as part of this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Used the Internet or instant messaging to work on an assignment for this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Used e-mail to communicate with the instructor for this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Discussed grades or assignments with your instructor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Discussed career plans with an advisor or an instructor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Discussed ideas from your readings or class with your instructor outside of this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Worked with your instructor on activities other than coursework for this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Discussed ideas from your readings or class with others (fellow students, coworkers, family, etc.) outside of this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Had serious conversations with students who differ from you.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. In this class, how would you rate the quality of your relationships with other students in the class?

Very good     
  Good     
  Fair     
  Poor

16. In this class, how would you rate the quality of your relationships with your instructors?

Very good     
  Good     
  Fair     
  Poor

*Continued on reverse side*

**Office Use Only -**

LC-H1

NLC-H2

LC-NH3

NLC-NH4

**Background Questions**

**17. How many terms (including the current term) have you been enrolled at College of DuPage?**

- One       Two       Three       Four or more

**18. Have you ever participated in a learning community class at any college?**

- Yes       No       Don't Know

If "Yes" to Item 18, please write the name of the class here: \_\_\_\_\_

**19. Have you ever taken classes at a college other than College of DuPage?**

- Yes       No

**20. What is your age?**

- 17 or younger       18 – 20       21- 24       25 – 39       40 – 54       55 or older

**21. What is your gender?**

- Male       Female

**22. Do you usually attend C.O.D. on a full-time or part-time basis?**

- Full-time (12 or more semester hours)       Part-time (less than 12 semester hours)

**23. Are you usually employed?**

- Full-time       Part-time       I'm not employed

**24. What is the major reason you are attending College of DuPage?**

- Complete a certificate program       Obtain an associate degree       Transfer to a 4-year college or university       Obtain or update job-related skills       Self improvement/ personal enjoyment       Change careers

**Comments?** \_\_\_\_\_

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*THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!  
Please return it to your Instructor*