Commanding English Program Evaluation

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Executive Summary

Commanding English is a one-year program within the General College (GC) of the University of Minnesota (U of M) that seeks to enhance the academic literacy skills of freshmen non-native speakers of English. The program enrolls between 45 and 60 students per year. It operates as a learning community where students enroll in a prescribed set of introductory courses in science, social science and humanities as well as courses in speech, reading and writing.

This evaluation is intended to provide a benchmark for staff and administrators against which future outcomes can be assessed. Consultation with CE staff and GC administrators identified three questions about the CE program: 1) To what extent is the CE program meeting its goal of building academic literacy? 2) How well is the CE program meeting its goal of providing a supportive environment? 3) To what extent has the CE program implemented activities as planned? The questions were addressed by analyzing the transcripts of former CE students, administering surveys to current and former CE students, administering a standardized English proficiency test to a sample of current CE students, and interviewing current and former CE staff.

The results of the evaluation suggest that the CE program facilitates the development of students’ literacy skills. Students who participated in the TOEFL test significantly improved their ability to listen, write, and read English. The amount that students improved or did not improve varied, but overall there was an increase in scores between their entry level scores and their scores at exit. However, results of the transcript analysis suggest that CE students struggle academically after leaving the program. Students leave the CE program with a relatively high
GPA but experience a drop in GPA the first term after completing the CE program. Students who transfer experience another drop in GPA the first term after transferring out of GC and most withdraw from at least one course. One reason for this is that after completing the CE program many students enroll in science and mathematics courses. Performance in chemistry, mathematics, and social science courses stood out as especially problematic. Low grades in math courses may be due to lack of adequate preparation in math, and failure to follow math placement recommendations. Math preparation is not currently addressed in the CE program.

The academic challenges students faced after transfer were reflected in the responses students gave to the Former CE Student Survey. Overall attitudes towards the CE program expressed by former CE students were extremely positive. However, some students expressed concerns about how well they were prepared for their current courses, and about the assistance they received with career decision making and transfer planning.

Survey and interview results support the claim that CE provides a positive community that endures beyond students’ participation in CE. Former CE students valued their relationships with CE staff, and reported on-going relationships with CE peers. CE staff establish personal connections to the students and try to build students’ confidence before they transfer to other programs. After students leave the CE program they sometimes face challenging transitions as they enter less supportive environments more typical of the U of M lower division. Information gathered from students, staff and testing suggests that the program is meeting its goals of providing an integrated, multicultural academic experience for students. The challenge for the program is to reconcile the needed emphasis on developing students’ English language
skills – reading, listening, speaking and writing – with students’ interests in careers that require strong preparation in mathematics and science.
CHAPTER 1: Description of the Commanding English Program

Program Philosophy and Rationale

Proficiency in English writing, reading, and oral communication is necessary to flourish and become a successful student at the post-secondary level. Students who either did not have access or had limited access to English education previous to college enrollment are at an immediate disadvantage when entering college. The mission of the CE program is to provide US residents who are non-native speakers of English, the opportunity to develop their English skills in order to be more successful in future coursework at the University of Minnesota.

Program History

The Commanding English program is a one-year post-secondary freshman level program housed in the General College (GC). CE originated in 1979 as part of GC’s Personalized Education Program (PEP) with the primary goal of validating the cultural origins of participants who were international students. In the late 1980s, CE became a stand alone program within GC. This shift occurred in response to an identified need to address the language needs of immigrant and refugee students. CE “became directly focused on developing academic literacy through content-based courses” (Christensen, 2005, pg 13). The primary theories that drive CE programming are “content-based language instruction, multiculturalism, and a broad view of developmental education” (Christensen, 2005, pg 21).

Literacy development continues to be central to the current CE program. Additional goals include preparing students for transfer and retention to degree. In the late 1980s, GC was restructured from a degree granting College to a transfer College. This restructuring highlighted
the need for GC and CE to monitor and assess the transfer and retention patterns of their students.

Goals, Objectives and Outcomes

The mission of CE is to prepare recent immigrant, non-native English speakers to be successful in post-secondary education. This mission is carried out by addressing two goals. One goal is to build academic literacy and the other is to provide a supportive environment in which students are able to grow both academically and socially. These goals are met by engaging students in the curriculum, building on existing scholastic skills, providing advising, tutorial services, career planning assistance, and developing learning communities. The intended outcomes of these two goals are to improve retention and academic performance of the CE students. Appendix A provides a list of objectives and outcomes linked to each goal.

Setting

General College is a lower division freshman-admitting college with the primary mission of preparing under-prepared students for transfer to degree-granting University of Minnesota colleges. The fall 2005 student body consists of 900 continuing students and 812 new admits for a total of 1712 students. The ethnic break down for the fall 2005 cohort is as follows, American Indian (n=39, 2.28%), Asian/Pacific Islander (n=335, 19.57%), African American (n=353, 20.62%), Chicano/Latino (n=95, 5.55%), White (n=846, 49.42%), International (n=5, .29%) and Not Available (n=39, 2.28%).

GC has 35 tenure-tenure track faculty, 27 teaching specialist and 13 graduate teaching assistants. The College offers a cross disciplinary curriculum including, math, writing and communication, social sciences, arts and humanities, sciences, and variety of supplemental
instruction and career planning courses. The main research focus of the faculty is developmental education. GC has an intrusive advising model that includes a required number of student/advisor contacts each term. GC also has a Mid-Semester Review system which provides students, instructors, and advisors with academic progress information at two points each semester (6th and 11th week). General College is a national leader in developmental education and uses research outcomes to improve transfer, retention, and graduation rates.

Program Staff

Commanding English has a program director, seven instructors, three advisors, and three writing consultants. The director’s responsibilities include overseeing and coordinating the staffing, budget, curriculum, outreach, recruitment, and assessment of the CE program. The instructional staff are responsible for teaching, fostering a positive learning environment for the CE students, research in their individual field of specialty, peer and student evaluation of their classes, and professional service and development. The director of the Writing Center coordinates tutorial services for CE students. The writing consultants provide one on one tutoring services for CE students. The advisors are responsible for academic and career planning, monitoring academic progress, and providing interventions, referrals, or other supports as necessary. Appendix B provides a complete listing of the 2005-2006 CE staff.

Participants

There are 61 undergraduate freshmen participating in the CE program for the 2005-2006 academic year. These students are selected through an extensive admissions process. There are a number of criteria that must be met to be eligible for admission to the CE program including: home language other than English, residing in the US fewer than 8 years, ACT reading and
English scores below 18, scoring between 65-79 on the Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) or 146-207 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

The ethnic make-up of the CE students has changed over time. Several years ago the majority of students were of Vietnamese ancestry. Today, most students are from Africa and have had interrupted educational backgrounds due to circumstances such as war and/or residing in refugee camps in their home countries.

Organization, Structure and Administration

The General College has three layers of administration. The Office of the Dean is the first layer with final authority on collegiate decisions. The second layer consists of the Communications Office, Students Services, Financial Services, Development and Alumni Relations, Academic Affairs and Curriculum, and the Center for Developmental Education and Urban Literacy. Student Services and Academic Affairs and Curriculum both consist of seven separate programs which forms the third layer. The Commanding English program is one of the seven programs that falls under the authority of the Office of Academic Affairs and Curriculum. At the time of this evaluation, Dan Detzner, Associate Dean and Director of Academic Affairs is the supervisor of the CE program and has the final authority for budgetary and program decisions. The General College organizational chart is attached as Appendix C.

Activities

CE participants are expected to enroll in a full-year of coursework, which includes 12 to 15 credits per semester. These courses take place within GC and are taught by GC faculty. During their first semester, CE students are grouped together in an effort to build a community of support. They are required to take a college reading course, a college writing workshop and
laboratory, an oral communication course, and a choice between three other GC courses. During
the second semester students take a reading course, a writing lab, an immigrant literature course,
and their choice between three other GC courses. The curriculum is designed to provide the
students with a sense that there is connection between instructors, as well as students. Special
attention is given to building a multicultural component into coursework. The CE curriculum is
presented in Appendix D.

The CE program offers specialized advising to all students in the program. Advisors in
this program are trained to understand the special stressors that this population often experience,
such as isolation on campus and family responsibilities. Advisors also work with students on
their academic and career goals to achieve successful transfer to another college.

Other optional CE activities include career seminars and tutoring services provided in the
Writing Center, housed within GC’s Academic Resource Center. Students may receive
assistance with finding sources, reading difficult material, identifying problematic grammatical
patterns, editing, and referencing sources in proper format.

Budget

The Commanding English annual budget for 2005-2006 is $359,457.00. Almost the
entire budget ($355,955.00) is committed to salaries. The remainder is operating supplies and
administrative fees. In addition to the CE budget, there are two other offices in GC that an
unspecified amount of resources are drawn from. The Office of Research and Evaluation, with a
budget of $235,855.00, provides staffing for CE’s evaluation and research needs. The Academic
Support Center, with a budget of $162,448.00, provides programmatic supplies, teaching
materials, and staffing for data entry and miscellaneous projects.
CHAPTER 2: Evaluation Questions and Rationale for Evaluation Design

The Evaluation Questions

The program evaluation questions are focused in three areas: building academic literacy, providing a supportive environment, and implementation of the program activities.

1. To what extent is the CE program meeting its goal of building academic literacy?
   - To what extent did students’ reading skills improve?
   - To what extent did students’ academic writing improve?
   - How skilled are students at using grammar correctly?

2. How well is the CE program meeting its goal of providing a supportive environment?
   - To what extent do students perceive supportive services (e.g. writing center) as helpful in meeting their needs?
   - To what extent do learning communities facilitate feelings of connection to peers and CE staff?

3. To what extent has the CE program implemented activities as planned?
   - What perceptions do students have of the multiculturalism focus in the classroom?
   - To what extent is the curriculum integrated?

Design of the Evaluation

The evaluation design evolved from a number of meetings with Primary Intended Users (Robin Murie, Program Director, and Dan Detzner, Associate Dean) and the CE teaching staff. It also incorporated input from experts in the field of English as Second Language learning and a review of assessment techniques appropriate for the population of the evaluation.
Several methods were used to measure the extent to which the goals of the CE program have been met. The first evaluation question addresses academic literacy. For the purposes of this evaluation, improvements in oral communication will only be reported from survey data. We have not identified an appropriate assessment of oral communication and time constraints did not permit us to develop our own. The remaining content areas (writing, reading, and grammar) were assessed through the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The TOEFL was administered in the classroom at the completion of the spring 2006 term. Almost all of the students in the CE program took a TOEFL or the MELAB test prior to their enrollment, and there is a conversion chart available to convert MELAB scores to TOEFL scores. Therefore, we had an opportunity to use a pre-post test design. According to experts in English as Second Language assessment, the TOEFL is a validated instrument used to assess populations similar to the students in the CE program (Robin Murie & Laurene Christianson, personal communications, October/November 2005). We also chose the TOEFL because it was available at a lower cost than alternative assessments.

Transcript analysis was used to explore how well former CE students were prepared for future courses. This method identifies both problematic courses for students and problematic patterns in course completion.

Surveys were designed and administered to students who are currently enrolled in the CE program and students from previous cohorts. These surveys asked students for their opinions about learning communities (issues of support), multiculturalism in the program, and effectiveness of courses, the Writing Center, and advising. Current students were surveyed to get opinions from people who are immersed in the program. Former students were surveyed for
information on how the CE program actually prepared them for future coursework. Therefore, each group of students provided unique information. Surveys were chosen as a method of inquiry because they provided a cost-effective way of capturing aggregate information.

We intended to use student interviews with a small group of former CE students in addition to the survey. Interviews allow for exploration of issues that the evaluators and clients are not previously aware of, thus providing information about unintended outcomes. Interviews also allow for probing of process oriented phenomena and clarification of answers that are unclear. However, only one student agreed to be interviewed, therefore this portion of the design was put aside.

Students are able to provide one viewpoint of the program, but the instructors and advisors often have an alternative view. For that reason, instructors and advisors were interviewed about their opinions regarding the effectiveness of the program in preparing students for future coursework and challenges they have faced in providing supportive services to students.

Two goals of General College programs are retention and transfer to degree seeking colleges. This report does not directly address retention and transfer rates, as these have been covered in prior reports (Connor, Franko, and Wambach, 2005).
CHAPTER 3: Transcript Analysis of Former CE Students

Introduction

Past experience with reviewing transcripts for specific groups of GC students has proven to be an effective way to identify where students are being successful, where they are struggling, and potential barrier courses (Jansen, Wambach, Franko, 2005). Transcripts of three cohorts of CE students were analyzed to gain a better understanding of how well prepared CE students are for future coursework and their level of academic progress once they leave the CE program.

Materials

Information for the transcript analysis was obtained from three different sources. The following information was obtained from the U of M data warehouse: college GPAs, courses, grades, terms of enrollment, academic programs students enrolled in and credits completed, and high school transcripts. Prematriculation major and career interest information was obtained from the General College Student Inventory (GCSI). Math placement scores were obtained from the General College math placement test. Both the GSCI and math placement test are completed by students before they begin their first term.

Methods and Participants

All students who entered the CE program in fall 2001 (n=36), fall 2002 (n=59), and fall 2003 (n=59) were included in the analysis for a total of 154 students. Table 3.1 displays the demographic information for students included in the transcript analysis. The racial/ethnic group categories are reported as they are found in the data warehouse.
Table 3.1: Demographic Characteristics of CE Cohorts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001 (N=36)</th>
<th>2002 (N=59)</th>
<th>2003 (N=59)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>17 (47%)</td>
<td>27 (46%)</td>
<td>25 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>18 (50%)</td>
<td>32 (54%)</td>
<td>33 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>15 (42%)</td>
<td>19 (32%)</td>
<td>22 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>14 (39%)</td>
<td>37 (63%)</td>
<td>32 (54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/missing</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The principle investigator reviewed each transcript three times. During the first reading, transfer terms, transfer colleges, numbers of terms students attended and GPA information were identified. During the second reading the courses, grades, and terms that students repeated were identified as well the grades they received in repeated courses. During the third reading, transcripts were reviewed for registration patterns to determine which program areas or disciplines each student was registering in. The data were entered into a spreadsheet then analyzed using SPSS.

Results

Three components of the transcript analysis are presented below including GPA trends, coursework, and major choices. The GPA trends section examines trends in grades over the course of students’ enrollment. The coursework section covers repeated courses, grades in specific disciplines, and math placement tests. The major choices section explores what majors former CE students enroll in and the stability of major patterns. These areas were selected because they represent different aspects of students’ academic progress.
GPA Trends

GPAs are both a useful and commonly used measure of student progress. Commanding English students’ GPAs were high during the CE program and then decreased after students left the CE program. Table 3.2 reports GPAs for the 2001, 2002 and 2003 CE cohorts at six different points: cumulative GPA at the end of the CE program, term GPA for the first non-CE term, term GPA for the last GC term, last cumulative GPA in GC, first non-GC term GPA, and last cumulative GPA. GPAs are reported for persisters, students who were still enrolled at the U of M during the 2005-2006 academic year, and for leavers, students who were not enrolled in the 2005-2006 academic year. Persisters outperformed leavers across time in all cohorts. Persisters and leavers in all cohorts experienced a drop in GPA between the CE program and their first non-CE term. Persisters improved their GPAs before leaving GC. Their average first non-CE term GPA was 2.44 and their average last term GC GPA was 2.61. Leavers’ GPAs continued to decline. Their average first non-CE term GPA was 2.08 and their average last term GC GPA was 1.87. All groups experienced another drop the term they transferred out of GC. Most of the 53 CE student leavers left before transferring out of GC. Of the 18 who did transfer, their first non-GC term GPA was 1.73. The 87 persisters who transferred earned a first transfer term GPA of 2.29. Figure 3.1 displays the trends in CE students’ term GPAs over time. The cumulative GPAs of persisters follow a similar trajectory for all cohorts. They were highest at the end of the CE program (3.45), declined before transferring out of GC (3.13) and continued to decline after transfer (current cumulative GPA = 2.85).
Table 3.2: GPA Across Time for CE Leavers and Persisters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leaver/Persister</th>
<th>CE Cum GPA</th>
<th>1st non-CE Term</th>
<th>Last GC Term</th>
<th>Last GC Cum</th>
<th>1st non-GC Term</th>
<th>Last Cum GPA*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001 Leaver</td>
<td>3.27 (n=15)</td>
<td>2.28 (n=14)</td>
<td>1.93 (n=9)</td>
<td>2.93 (n=9)</td>
<td>2.00 (n=9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 Persister</td>
<td>3.43 (n=21)</td>
<td>2.43 (n=21)</td>
<td>2.90 (n=21)</td>
<td>3.16 (n=21)</td>
<td>2.64 (n=21)</td>
<td>2.88 (n=21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 Total</td>
<td>3.36 (n=36)</td>
<td>2.37 (n=35)</td>
<td>2.61 (n=30)</td>
<td>3.09 (n=30)</td>
<td>2.45 (n=30)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 Leaver</td>
<td>3.00 (n=19)</td>
<td>1.88 (n=17)</td>
<td>1.94 (n=7)</td>
<td>2.97 (n=7)</td>
<td>1.58 (n=6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 Persister</td>
<td>3.42 (n=40)</td>
<td>2.31 (n=40)</td>
<td>2.43 (n=37)</td>
<td>3.01 (n=37)</td>
<td>2.16 (n=37)</td>
<td>2.75 (n=37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 Total</td>
<td>3.29 (n=59)</td>
<td>2.18 (n=57)</td>
<td>2.35 (n=44)</td>
<td>3.01 (n=44)</td>
<td>2.08 (n=43)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 Leaver</td>
<td>2.50 (n=19)</td>
<td>2.13 (n=11)</td>
<td>1.39 (n=2)</td>
<td>2.34 (n=2)</td>
<td>.20 (n=1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 Persister</td>
<td>3.49 (n=40)</td>
<td>2.53 (n=40)</td>
<td>2.63 (n=35)</td>
<td>3.23 (n=35)</td>
<td>2.19 (n=29)</td>
<td>2.95 (n=29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 Total</td>
<td>3.17 (n=59)</td>
<td>2.47 (n=51)</td>
<td>2.57 (n=37)</td>
<td>3.19 (n=37)</td>
<td>2.13 (n=30)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Leavers</td>
<td>2.90 (n=53)</td>
<td>2.08 (n=42)</td>
<td>1.87 (n=18)</td>
<td>2.88 (n=18)</td>
<td>1.73 (n=16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Persisters</td>
<td>3.45 (n=101)</td>
<td>2.44 (n=101)</td>
<td>2.61 (n=93)</td>
<td>3.13 (n=93)</td>
<td>2.29 (n=87)</td>
<td>2.85 (n=87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Groups</td>
<td>3.26 (n=154)</td>
<td>2.33 (n=143)</td>
<td>2.49 (n=111)</td>
<td>3.09 (n=111)</td>
<td>2.20 (n=103)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* refers here only to last term GPA earned by persisters who have transferred out of GC
In this section we analyze course patterns across disciplines, including grades earned and number of repeated courses. We also examine whether or not placement tests and high school grades can assist in predicting how a student performs in their college courses. Finally, patterns of enrollment are examined.

**Grades in CE**

The data from GPAs across time indicates that students earn their best grades during their year in CE. Grades earned during the CE program were broken down into four categories: grades earned in CE support classes (1041, 1042, and 1051), grades earned in CE core classes (1364, 1421, and 1422), grades earned in CE content courses (1131, 1135, 1211, 1285, and 1311) and grades earned in non-CE courses. Table 3.3 displays the courses in each category and the average GPA earned for the given category. Average GPA is also included for any class or
group of classes in which there was an enrollment over 10. Grades earned in non-CE courses were significantly lower than grades earned in CE core classes, CE support classes, and CE content courses. Grades earned in CE core classes were significantly lower than grades earned in CE support classes ($F = 13.83, p < .001$).

Table 3.3: GPA by Category of Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category/Average GPA</th>
<th>Courses/Discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entire CE Support Category: 3.47</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>GC 1041 (N = 144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>GC 1042 (N = 132)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>GC 1051 (N = 157)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entire CE Core Category: 3.29</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>GC 1364 (N = 119)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>GC 1421 (N = 143)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>GC 1422 (N = 135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entire CE Content Category: 3.34</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>GC 1131 (N = 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>GC 1135 (N = 36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>GC 1211 (N = 68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>GC 1285 (N = 68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>GC 1311 (N = 92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entire Non-CE Category: 2.90</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>GC Math, Statistics (N = 54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>German (N = 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>GC Government or Law (N = 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>GC Psychology (N = 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>LASK, Career Development, Freshman Seminar (N = 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>Non-GC Math (N = 56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>Music (N = 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>Physical Education (N = 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>Pharmacy (N = 3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: W’s removed for GPA averages
Repeated Courses

The number of courses a student repeats is another useful measure of student progress. Students typically repeat courses that are required for their majors when their original grade is a W or F, below the necessary grade for admission to a major, or below the necessary grade for progress in a sequence of courses. Students who repeat multiple courses are likely to take longer to reach graduation. About 70% of the CE students repeated at least one course. Table 3.4 presents frequency of repeated courses for the 2001, 2002 and 2003 cohorts throughout their tenure at the U of M. Repeated courses were most likely to be in science (n = 114), math (n = 75) and social science (n = 68). There weren’t enough repeated courses in the arts, humanities and communication to justify further descriptions. These courses are included in “other”. Figure 3.2 displays the relative frequency of repeated courses by category. A list of all courses that were repeated is attached as Appendix E.

Table 3.4: Frequency of Repeated Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of repeats</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>10 (28%)</td>
<td>12 (20%)</td>
<td>25 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11 (31%)</td>
<td>7 (12%)</td>
<td>11 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 (11%)</td>
<td>13 (22%)</td>
<td>13 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>6 (10%)</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
<td>9 (14%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
<td>5 (8%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: % indicate percentage within column, e.g. 28% of 2001 cohort did not repeat a course.
Figure 3.2: Frequency of Repeated Courses in Specific Disciplines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Science*

This section is broken into two categories of science grades: biology and chemistry/physics. Table 3.5 displays grades earned in GC science courses and biology department courses. There are two columns listed for each grade earned, if the number is in the R column, it indicates the number of students who repeated the course, and if the number is in the nR column, it indicates the number of students who did not attempt the course again. For example, of the students who enrolled in GC 1112, 1 student earned a B and did not repeat the course, 4 earned Cs and did not repeat the class, 1 earned a D and did not repeat the course, and 1 earned an F and did repeat the course. These tables identify courses that appear to be most problematic for students.
Students typically earned lower grades in Biology department courses than GC Biology courses, as can be seen in Figure 3.3. Few students earn over a C in Biology department courses, whereas the majority of students earn over a C in GC Biology courses. CE students were more often enrolled in GC 1131 and GC 1135 than other GC biology courses. Both classes were paired with a CE reading course, if taken while students were enrolled in the CE program.
Table 3.6 displays the same information for Chemistry and Physics courses. Whereas in Biology a number of students enrolled in the GC Biology courses, most students completed chemistry courses in the Chemistry department rather than in GC. GC 1166 is excluded from this analysis because only 7 students took it. Students do fairly well in Physics but a small number of students take those courses; Chemistry courses are the problematic courses for CE students. As can be seen from examining Table 3.6 and Figure 3.4, a large number of students enroll in Chemistry courses and a high percentage of those students received a failing grade or withdrew. For example 34/50 (68%) received lower than a C or withdrew from Chem 1011. Seventeen of the 34 enrolled to take the course again. Thirty-eight of the 162 (23%) students who enrolled in a 1000 level chemistry course repeated the course. Only 35 (22%) earned an A or B. It would appear that Chemistry is one key road block for CE students in maintaining a high GPA and progressing to graduation in a timely manner.
Table 3.6: Grades in 1st Enrollment in Chemistry and Physics Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>As</th>
<th>Bs</th>
<th>Cs</th>
<th>Ds</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>nR</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>nR</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>nR</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>nR</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chem 1011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chem 1021</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chem 1022</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chem 2301</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chem 2302</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chem 2311</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys 1001</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys 1101</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys 1201</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys 1202</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys 1301</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys 1302</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R=Repeat; nR=non-repeat, repeat attempts excluded

Figure 3.4: First Chemistry/Physics Grades

Note: repeat attempts excluded

Students who plan to take chemistry should take the U of M chemistry placement test.

Students who have not had high school chemistry or score below a criterion on the U of M chemistry test should begin with CHEM 1011 or GC 1166. We did not have access to U of M
chemistry placement test data, therefore we reviewed the high school transcripts of the three
cohorts to determine if high school chemistry grades could assist advisors in providing students
with more guidance in selecting their first chemistry course. Table 3.7 displays the grades for
first chemistry courses by whether or not the student passed their high school chemistry courses.

Table 3.7: College Grade in Chemistry by High School Grade in Chemistry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U of MN First Chemistry Grade</th>
<th>C or Above in High School</th>
<th>Below C in High School</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>5 (15%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>10 (30%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>6 (18%)</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
<td>7 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3 (9%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>3 (9%)</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
<td>5 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33 (100%)</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 5 students (13%) did not pass their high school chemistry courses (earned a C or
higher), and out of these 5, only one earned a passing grade (C-) in their college chemistry
course. Thirty-three students had passing grades in high school chemistry (87%), however only
18 (56%) of those 33 earned a C- or higher in college chemistry. High school grades do not
appear to be a strong predictor of college chemistry grades. It should be noted that most high
school transcripts did not have grades reported for classes students took during their senior year
because these courses were in progress when students applied to the U of M; students who
completed chemistry during their senior year of high school are not included in these analyses.

Math Courses

Some CE students began taking mathematics courses while they were in CE and most
register for mathematics at some point after leaving the CE program. Figure 3.5 displays the
grades earned in math courses taken during or after the CE program by whether or not the class was offered in GC or the Math department. More students enrolled in Math department courses than in GC math courses; however they were less likely to earn below a C in a GC course than in a Math course. There appears to be a larger discrepancy between grades earned in the Math department and in GC math courses when examining all math classes, as opposed to looking at math courses taken during the CE program. There are two possible interpretations of this fact. One, it is possible that students who are ready to take math while in CE are more mathematically skilled. A second possible explanation is that students may do better in math courses while having the support within the CE program.

Figure 3.5: Earned Grades in GC and Math Department

![Bar chart showing frequency of grades in GC Math and Math Department]

Note: repeat attempts excluded

Which math courses have been taken and how often particular courses are repeated is presented in Table 3.8. CE students usually passed math courses taken in GC, and 6% of students repeated a GC math. However, students struggled more in Math department courses.
Depending on the course, 0 – 33% of students repeated a math department course. Those who earned below a C or withdrew were more likely to repeat the class.

Table 3.8: Frequency of Math Grades in Repeated and Non-Repeated Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>As</th>
<th>Bs</th>
<th>Cs</th>
<th>Ds</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% repeats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GC 0721/22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 0731/32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1031</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1038</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1051</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>12.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1142</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1151</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1155</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1271</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1272</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 2243</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 2263</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 2374</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R=Repeat; nR=non-repeat, repeat attempts excluded

In GC the decision about what course is an appropriate first math registration is made by the student in consultation with his or her advisor. The math placement test is used to guide, but not determine that decision. Recommendations for math registration fall into 6 categories or placement groups listed below; placement group 1 represents the highest math scores and placement group 6 represents the lowest.
• Placement group 1 = take the algebra readiness test offered by Math Department
• Placement group 2 = GC 0731, 0732
• Placement group 3 = GC 0721, 0722, 0731, 0732
• Placement group 4 = GC 0721, 0722
• Placement group 5 = GC 0712, 0721, 0722
• Placement group 6 = GC 0712

CE students received mathematics placement recommendations over the entire range of possible placement groups. Few students (7 out of 115 who registered for a math course) earned placement test scores that recommend beginning with college level courses. However, 62 CE students (55%) started with a college level math course. Of the remaining students, 33 (29%) registered for intermediate algebra (GC 0731/0732) and 18 (16%) registered for beginning algebra (GC 0721/0722). Students tended to pass their first math courses regardless of whether they followed their placement recommendation (70%). Students who followed their recommended placement earned higher grades. Detailed information about the relationship between first math grades and whether the placement recommendation was followed is presented in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: 1st Math Grade by Whether Placement Recommendation was Followed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Followed Recommendation</th>
<th>Did not Follow Recommendation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A, A-</td>
<td>12 (41%)</td>
<td>11 (13%)</td>
<td>23 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+, B, B-</td>
<td>13 (45%)</td>
<td>22 (36%)</td>
<td>35 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+, C, C-</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>26 (30%)</td>
<td>28 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+, D</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7 (8%)</td>
<td>7 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>11 (13%)</td>
<td>13 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.10 indicates the frequency of students in each placement group who took specific math courses; percentages are given for frequency within column. For example, 67% of 2001 students who were in the fourth placement group completed GC 0721 or GC 0722.

Table 3.10: Math Placement by Math Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Math Class</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2001 Cohort</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 0721/0722</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (67%)</td>
<td>2 (33%)</td>
<td>2 (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 0731/0732</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (23%)</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>1 (33%)</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1031</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (23%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1051</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (17%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1142</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (15%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1271</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (23%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 2243</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2002 Cohort</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 0721/0722</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (14%)</td>
<td>4 (31%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 0731/0732</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>1 (17%)</td>
<td>1 (14%)</td>
<td>2 (15%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1031</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (17%)</td>
<td>1 (14%)</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1051</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (40%)</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>4 (57%)</td>
<td>6 (43%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1155</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1271</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>1 (17%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1272</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2003 Cohort</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 0721/0722</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (17%)</td>
<td>3 (25%)</td>
<td>4 (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 0731/0732</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>5 (63%)</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
<td>4 (33%)</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1031</td>
<td>1 (14%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>1 (17%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1051</td>
<td>1 (14%)</td>
<td>6 (55%)</td>
<td>1 (13%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (33%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1142</td>
<td>1 (14%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1151</td>
<td>4 (57%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (17%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 1155</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Science Courses

Aside from the “other” category, social science courses comprised the smallest portion of total repeated courses. For social science there were fewer repeats spread out over many courses so they have been collapsed into disciplines. Table 3.11 presents the frequency of repeated courses by specific social science disciplines; the percentages indicate percent of total repeated social science courses. The majority of the courses repeated fell into the following disciplines: Economics, Business, Accounting, Psychology, and Sociology.

Table 3.11: Repeated Courses in Social Science by Discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Econ/Business/Accounting</td>
<td>18 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>13 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>10 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Social Science</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Science</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Psychology</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinesiology</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major choices

The first college students transferred into is presented in Table 3.12. In each of the cohorts, students transferred into several different colleges. The majority of students from each cohort transferred to CLA, however this percentage dropped in the 2003 cohort. Student transfers to CBS increased with each cohort.
Table 3.12: First Transfer College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CALA</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (7%)</td>
<td>5 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCE</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHE</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>18 (60%)</td>
<td>31 (70%)</td>
<td>20 (54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COAFES</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>3 (7%)</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOM</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EHD</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>3 (7%)</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We also compared the stability of students’ major choices across their time at the University, beginning with the GCSI given at orientation and ending with their last registration pattern. Students were coded as “changed major” if their last registration pattern differed from their previous interest. More students remained in their same majors than changed majors, as indicated in Table 3.13. Many students did not have GCSI information available or did not follow a recognizable registration pattern after they completed the CE program. Appendix F provides detailed information about the prematriculation interests and registration patterns of CE students. This appendix displays specifically where students’ interests began, and how many times their interest changed.

Table 3.13: Stability of Major Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stability</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not change</td>
<td>12 (33%)</td>
<td>27 (46%)</td>
<td>25 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed</td>
<td>12 (33%)</td>
<td>12 (20%)</td>
<td>11 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided to Decided</td>
<td>4 (11%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>4 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decided to Undecided</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Registration Data</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>9 (15%)</td>
<td>16 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No GCSI data</td>
<td>7 (19%)</td>
<td>8 (14%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary: Transcript Analysis

Conducting a transcript analysis allowed us to assess the academic patterns of CE students. A number of concerns emerged during this process. The first concern is the decline in GPA over time experienced by most CE students. Students leave the CE program with a relatively high GPA but experience a drop in GPA the first term after completing the CE program. Students who transfer experience another drop in GPA the first term after transferring out of GC. The relatively high GPA earned in the CE program may serve as a buffer against probation for post CE course work, especially for persisters who leave the CE program with higher GPAs than leavers.

A second concern is the number of repeated courses in math, science and social science. Many CE students (70%) repeated at least one course. Chemistry and math department courses stood out as especially problematic, particularly when taken after transferring out of CE. Repeating courses can be problematic for two reasons, it slows down progress towards graduation and it may mean that students are taking classes they are not prepared for.

A third concern is the relationship between the first math class students take and their math placement test scores. Most students tend to pass their first math class but students who follow their placement recommendation tend to receive higher grades than students who don’t follow their recommendation.
CHAPTER 4: The Commanding English Experience Survey

Introduction

Former CE students were invited to complete a survey about their experiences in the CE program. Participants were asked to respond to questions regarding the CE program’s contribution to improvement in academic skills and preparation for future coursework. Participants also answered items about their attitudes towards program components and students’ confidence in their academic skills. The CE program goals that are addressed include:

- To what extent is the CE program meeting its goal of building academic literacy?
- How well is the CE program meeting its goal of providing a supportive environment?

Materials

The “CE Experience” survey was an adaptation of the "GC Experience" survey. At the time it was developed, the GC Experience survey went through a rigorous pilot process including GC committee consultation on survey topics, focus groups of former GC students, and a pilot with a second group of former GC students. Items were altered to reflect components of the CE program. The revised survey was reviewed by the evaluation investigators and extensively reviewed by a non-native English speaker. The survey was then prepared to be distributed as a web-based application. The survey is attached as Appendix G.

Methods and Participants

The CE Experience survey was sent by e-mail to students who entered the CE program in fall 2002, fall 2003, and fall 2004 and had been enrolled during the 2005-2006 academic year. There were 120 students who matched the criteria. Students were provided a consent form and the opportunity to be entered into a drawing for a $50.00 U of MN Book Store gift certificate.
Three $50.00 gift certificates were available. Students were asked to provide their student ID if they wished to be entered into the drawing. Students were given three weeks to complete the survey. After the original e-mail solicitation, students received a follow-up request to participate from Robin Murie, CE Program Director, and a second e-mail reminder from the primary investigator. At the end of the survey period 26 surveys were returned. Two recipients of the $50.00 gift certificates were randomly drawn from this group. To increase the response rate, a paper copy of the survey and a self-addressed stamped envelope was mailed to students who had not responded. Students who had suppressed their directory information were excluded from the mailing. Surveys were mailed to 66 students. The students were given two weeks to return a completed survey. An additional 13 surveys were returned. The recipient of the third $50.00 gift certificate was randomly drawn from this group. The number of respondents increased to 39 surveys for a 32.5% response rate. Responses were received from each of the three cohorts as follows: fall 2002 (n=12), fall 2003 (n=15) and fall 2004 (n=12). Demographic data is presented for each CE cohort in table 4.1. Due to the small number of students in each category, demographic data is not presented for survey respondents.

Table 4.1: Demographic Information for Each CE Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2002 (N=59)</th>
<th>2003 (N=59)</th>
<th>2004 (N=32)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>27 (46%)</td>
<td>25 (42%)</td>
<td>14 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>32 (54%)</td>
<td>33 (56%)</td>
<td>18 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>19 (32%)</td>
<td>22 (37%)</td>
<td>13 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>37 (63%)</td>
<td>32 (54%)</td>
<td>16 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

Data was initially reviewed by cohort to determine if there were differences in responses based on the year students entered the CE program. It was found that responses were spread fairly evenly across groups. Because there was an even distribution by cohort, descriptive statistics are presented below for the entire group of 39 respondents.

Items 2 through 16 on the survey addressed general questions about the students’ overall opinions about the CE program, staff, courses, CE peers, and how challenging they found the program to be. Questions 2 through 4 asked students to describe their overall opinion about the CE program, their interactions with CE staff and their interactions with CE peers. Most students rated each item positive to very positive. Responses for questions 2 through 4, are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Responses to Items 2-4 from CE Experience Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>very negative</th>
<th>negative</th>
<th>neither negative or positive</th>
<th>positive</th>
<th>very positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Overall opinion of the CE program.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>17 (43.6%)</td>
<td>17 (43.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Interactions with CE staff.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
<td>13 (33.3%)</td>
<td>21 (53.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Interactions with CE peers.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>19 (48.7%)</td>
<td>19 (48.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 5 and 6 asked students to indicate how much they currently interact with the CE students who attended the program with them and how helpful relationships with CE peers have been to their continued academic progress at the University. Students indicated that they interact with their CE peers monthly, weekly and daily. Each category received 11 (28.2%) responses. The remaining respondents (n=6, 15.4%) indicated they interact with their CE peers...
1-2 times a year. When asked to rate the helpfulness of relationships with CE peers, 46.2% (n=18) of the students selected very much, 28.2% (n=11) selected much, 17.9% (n=7) selected some, and 5.1% (n=2) selected a little. All students reported that they have had continued contact with their CE peers and these relationships have been helpful to them.

Questions 7 through 12 asked students to rate their level of satisfaction with components of the CE program including advising, the Writing Center, course selection, and the degree to which their CE courses prepared them for future coursework. When satisfied and very satisfied responses were combined, students rated overall satisfaction with advising (87.2%) and support received from the Writing Center (84.6%) the highest. Overall satisfaction with CE courses and degree to which CE courses prepared them for future courses followed with 77% each. Fewer students were satisfied with course selection (69.3%) and the advice they received about their major before transfer (59%). Responses to each item are presented in Table 4.3.
Table 4.3: Satisfaction With Services and Program Components from CE Experience Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>very dissatisfied</th>
<th>dissatisfied</th>
<th>neither dissatisfied or satisfied</th>
<th>satisfied</th>
<th>very satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Overall satisfaction with advising you received while in CE.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>20 (51.3%)</td>
<td>14 (35.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The advice you received about your major before you transferred.</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>11 (28.2%)</td>
<td>17 (43.6%)</td>
<td>6 (15.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The support you received from the Writing Center (WC).</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (15.4%)</td>
<td>16 (41.0%)</td>
<td>17 (43.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Your overall satisfaction with your CE courses.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>7 (17.9%)</td>
<td>15 (38.5%)</td>
<td>15 (38.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The course choices available to you while in the CE program.</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>6 (15.4%)</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
<td>18 (46.2%)</td>
<td>9 (23.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The degree to which your CE courses prepared you for future</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>21 (53.8%)</td>
<td>9 (23.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 13 and 14 asked students to reflect back on their CE experience and rate how much it was like what they expected and whether they would enroll in the program again. Most students (n=22, 56.4%) indicated the CE program was somewhat like they expected. Another 20.5% (n=8) felt it was very close to what they expected. The majority of students indicated they would definitely 23.1% (n=9), probably 38.5% (n=15), or might (23.1%, n=9) enroll again. The remaining students indicated they probably would not (n=5, 12.8%) or definitely would not (n=1, 2.6%) enroll again. Although 87% of the students viewed the program as positive/very positive, only 61.5% indicated it was likely or definite that they would enroll again.
Questions 15 and 16 asked students to rate how challenging they felt their academic experience was and then to identify what they found most challenging. The majority of students felt the CE curriculum was either moderately challenging (n=14, 35.9%) or challenging (n=13, 33.3%). Four students (10.3%) felt it was very challenging. The remaining students indicated they felt the curriculum was slightly challenging (n=7, 17.9%) or not at all challenging (n=1, 2.6%). Writing (n=17, 43.6%) and oral communication (n=12, 30.8%) were selected the most frequently when students were asked to identify the most challenging area of the CE program. Reading and grammar were both selected 3 times (7.7%). Students were given an option to report an “other” response. Three students selected this option. Their choices included anthropology, human anatomy and physiology, and writing and oral communication. Because students were given an “other” option, it is not known how students would have responded if they would have been given an exhaustive list of courses and attributes. If more options were available to students, the results reported above might not be replicated.

Questions 17 through 27 focused on goal achievement and how much students’ CE experience contributed to each goal. The items in this section focus on the CE program goals and include becoming a better student, becoming a more confident student, and meeting and respecting people from diverse backgrounds. Responses to all items are summarized in Table 4.4. Students rated all items more positively than negatively. The goals rated the highest were respect for cultural differences (very much, n=22, 56.4%) and meeting new people/making new friends (very much, n=16, 41.0%). Students felt their CE experience contributed more to their confidence in academic skills (writing, reading) than language skills (vocabulary, grammar). There were four areas that were rated lower than other areas. They include becoming a better
reader, becoming a better test taker, making a good transfer/major decision, and clarifying educational/career goals.

Table 4.4: Goal Achievement from CE Experience Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>not at all</th>
<th>very little</th>
<th>some</th>
<th>much</th>
<th>very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17. Clarify my educational/career goals.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (15.4%)</td>
<td>10 (25.6%)</td>
<td>15 (38.5%)</td>
<td>8 (20.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Become a better reader.</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>11 (28.2%)</td>
<td>18 (46.2%)</td>
<td>7 (17.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Become a better writer.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>9 (23.1%)</td>
<td>16 (41.0%)</td>
<td>13 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Become better at oral communication.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>12 (30.8%)</td>
<td>15 (38.5%)</td>
<td>11 (28.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Become more confident in academic skills (writing, reading).</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>7 (17.9%)</td>
<td>20 (51.3%)</td>
<td>11 (28.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Become more confident in language skills (vocabulary, grammar).</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (7.7%)</td>
<td>9 (23.1%)</td>
<td>15 (38.5%)</td>
<td>12 (30.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Respect cultural differences among peers.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
<td>12 (30.8%)</td>
<td>22 (56.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Meet new people and make new friends.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
<td>18 (46.2%)</td>
<td>16 (41.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Become a better test taker.</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>11 (28.2%)</td>
<td>19 (48.7%)</td>
<td>3 (7.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Understand myself better as a learner.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (7.7%)</td>
<td>11 (28.2%)</td>
<td>16 (41.0%)</td>
<td>9 (23.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Make a good transfer and major decision.</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
<td>10 (25.6%)</td>
<td>16 (41.0%)</td>
<td>6 (15.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 28 through 32 asked students to rate the overall ability of CE instructors, the environment of CE classes, and their preparation for success in non-CE classes. Students rated all areas positively. Ratings were especially high for instructors’ overall knowledge (66.7% very good) and instructors’ respect and concern for students (66.7% very good). The area rated
lowest was preparation for non-CE classes (51.3% very good). Students were asked earlier in the survey about their satisfaction with preparation for future courses. Responses to that question indicated a lower level of satisfaction (23.1% very satisfied) than the response to preparation for non-CE classes. Responses to items 28 through 32 are displayed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Rating Instructors and Class Components from CE Experience Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>very poor</th>
<th>poor</th>
<th>okay</th>
<th>good</th>
<th>very good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28. Overall teaching ability of the instructors.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>13 (33.3%)</td>
<td>22 (56.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Instructors’ overall knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>9 (23.1%)</td>
<td>26 (66.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Instructors’ overall respect and concern for the students.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>11 (28.2%)</td>
<td>26 (66.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Classes had a supportive learning environment.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>13 (33.3%)</td>
<td>22 (56.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. CE classes prepared me for success in non-CE classes.</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7 (17.9%)</td>
<td>11 (28.2%)</td>
<td>20 (51.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 33 through 41 asked students to rate how well they liked or disliked characteristics of the CE program. The characteristics students liked most about the program were the social and support components of the CE program such as access to writing tutors and frequent contact with instructors. The components that were least liked were the academic components such as taking courses that require a lot of writing, reading, or giving oral presentations. Responses to questions 33 through 41 are presented in Table 4.6.
Table 4.6: CE Characteristics from CE Experience Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>strongly disliked</th>
<th>somewhat disliked</th>
<th>neither disliked nor liked</th>
<th>somewhat liked</th>
<th>strongly liked</th>
<th>not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33. Frequent contact with instructors.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>3 (7.7%)</td>
<td>6 (15.4%)</td>
<td>26 (66.7%)</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Small classes.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>4 (10.4%)</td>
<td>31 (79.5%)</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Having many classes in the same building.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>3 (10.3%)</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
<td>26 (66.7%)</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Taking courses which required a lot of writing.</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>7 (17.9%)</td>
<td>15 (38.5%)</td>
<td>12 (30.8%)</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Taking courses which required a lot of reading.</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>8 (20.5%)</td>
<td>12 (30.8%)</td>
<td>13 (33.8%)</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Taking courses which required oral presentations.</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
<td>12 (30.8%)</td>
<td>14 (35.9%)</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Opportunities to interact with other CE students.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>14 (35.9%)</td>
<td>19 (48.7%)</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Emphasis on cultural diversity.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (7.7%)</td>
<td>10 (25.6%)</td>
<td>23 (59.0%)</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Access to writing tutors.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>8 (20.5%)</td>
<td>27 (69.2%)</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 42 through 59 asked students to rate their current level of skill in specific academic areas. The majority of students rated their current skill level as medium to high. The lowest ability estimates were reported for writing papers (n=29, 74.4%). The highest ability ratings were reported for choosing courses and planning a major. Responses to questions 42 through 59 are presented in Table 4.7.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>very low</th>
<th>low</th>
<th>medium</th>
<th>high</th>
<th>very high</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42. Reading academic materials.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>17 (43.5%)</td>
<td>14 (35.9%)</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Test taking.</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>18 (46.2%)</td>
<td>14 (35.9%)</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Writing papers.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>29 (74.4%)</td>
<td>8 (20.5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Working in groups.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>15 (38.5%)</td>
<td>18 (46.2%)</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Making presentations in class.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (7.7%)</td>
<td>18 (46.2%)</td>
<td>13 (33.3%)</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Using the library.</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>3 (7.7%)</td>
<td>11 (28.2%)</td>
<td>15 (38.5%)</td>
<td>7 (17.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Choosing courses and planning a</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>9 (28.1%)</td>
<td>19 (48.7%)</td>
<td>6 (15.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Contacting faculty and staff when</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td>12 (30.8%)</td>
<td>12 (30.8%)</td>
<td>10 (25.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you need assistance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 50 through 52 asked students what their current major is and to rate the likelihood that they would graduate from the U of MN. The majority of students reported that their current major is in a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) field (59%). Other areas students listed included Business (20.5%), Family Social Science (5.1%), Psychology (5.1%), and Sociology (2.6%). A list of majors is presented in Table 4.8. Students were also confident that they will graduate from the U of MN. Twenty-five (62.1%) indicated they are 100% confident and 20.5% (n=8) indicated they are 75% confident. Other students indicated they are 50% (n=3) confident or 25% (n=1) confident.
Table 4.8: Current Major from CE Experience Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Economics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Psychology</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Social Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Development</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Business and Management</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Technology and Chemistry</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Med-Tech</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiology, Med-Tech</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science and Economics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre Dental Hygiene</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Pharmacy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Pharmacy and Family Social Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology/Afro Studies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 53 and 54 were open ended items which asked students to report their best and worst experience with the CE program. There were more best experiences reported than worst
experiences. The best experience comments covered a broad spectrum with comments about instructors and CE peers occurring most often. There were few worst experiences reported. Comments about course selection and advisors judging student ability were reported multiple times. Comments submitted for best experience are presented in Table 4.9. Comments submitted for worst experience are presented in Table 4.10. Comments are provided as submitted with a small amount of editing done to protect anonymity.

Table 4.9: Best Experiences from CE Experience Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A small class is good. Instructors teach with enthusiasm. CE program is useful for minority students to improve English. Taking CE classes are fundamental for students to choose their majors or transfer other colleges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making New Friends and Learning many new things about college and life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to know the teacher and my classmate and also teachers used to care about me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got knowledge and was pleased with my hard work. Got confidence and high self-esteem. Developed a positive friendship with both students and instructors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers and professors where very helpful, supportive and most of all very caring about my success which is a unique trait in such a large institution! I really miss them all and always know that they made a difference in my life as a person and knowledge seeker. They were the best at what they do and their efforts and leadership in the area of developmental education is known and recognized nationally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I met a lot of people in the program that am still friends with today. I learn a lot about their cultures and learn to understand them better. I got most of my best grades in CE program. The teachers care more!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having small classes. Being able to interact with students on a regular basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned many cultures, knew all my instructors, wrote a 20 page paper!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with all the GC students and staffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My best experience with CE program was that CE allowed me to a college level student. Without CE I couldn't continue been student at U of MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt like being in a family. Professors and students were friendly and kind. Small class sizes made me make comfortable in a school environment. If not CE program, I don't know how I would have made it in school. This program gave me opportunity to get into the University and it helped me to find what I like. I am very thankful for all that CE program helped me to achieve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction between students/students and instructors/students. love small classes and support from instructors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met other students with lots of things in common.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support from instructors. Having small group like in HS, where I meet the same face every day. That makes me more comfortable.

The vast diversity and interactions with each other in a way that you do not expect that these cultures compiled now in CE to interact outside of the classroom; we all carried the name of CE in our heads and not our differences.

I had a wonderful year at GC. It was the best year that I ever had at the U of M. I love CE program. I think it’s the best :)

I gained a lot of experience during my CE year. I became a better person.

All the classes I took during freshman year, worked hard to get the papers done.

The Instructors, the students, the environment

The instructors are very helpful and understandable. Also, the classes are small and there are a lot of resources students can use. The only reason that I came to U of M because of the Commanding English Program.

My best experience with the CE program is how the teachers and the students interact with each other. They many different cultures that are in the same room is a great feeling.

Meeting new students and helpful and devoted instructors. It helped me to speed up my reading pace and my writing abilities. It was a great way to start college because CE gave brief overviews of what is expected by other college courses. It made me ready to face the challenges in college.

I could meet new people and it was easy to get along with them. There were people from many countries and it was interesting to talk with them.

Friendly people and small classes so we get more attention from our instructor.

That's my experience in writing, reading, taking tests. I learned all of these from CE. This program is very helpful to me.

The Sociology and cultural anthropology class were the best experiences; it was a great mix of American born students and CE students. I talked and made friends with American students who were open minded and friendly enough to correct me (reading and writing skills) and helped me with my academic and social life transition from CE to normal UMN classes and life. I definitely appreciate what this program offered me. All you need, it's there...now go get it!!!!

Meet new people and make new friends.

CE Program has the BEST teachers, and they are always there to help. They respect and concern about CE students to the highest level; there is no other professors show that much concern for students in any other colleges. I really appreciate all the help I received from my CE teachers.

Teacher working with students one on one.

Established a good friendship both Teachers and Classmates

Good

Interacting with students and teachers.
Table 4.10: Worst Experiences from CE Experience Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Its little minor from my own experience, but most of college mates did like</td>
<td>Most of college mates did not like the judgment of the counselors and how they judged students without listening to them. For example, you would tell students it's hard to get into Medical school, and I don't think you can make it to there, why not try this, and this, and this. Most of student viewed that negatively, and would develop low-self esteem. Advisors should be there to inspire student, build their moral, and help them reach their dreams, and not the opposite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fact that I did not have much of freedom to choose challenging courses</td>
<td>The fact that I did not have much freedom to choose challenging courses while in CE program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The limited choice of content classes</td>
<td>The limited choice of content classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None, I had the wonderful time with the CE program.</td>
<td>None, I had the wonderful time with the CE program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not do so good in my 1422, which is sad. And the other thing was that</td>
<td>I did not do so good in my 1422, which is sad. And the other thing was that I did not have many different choices of which classes I wanted to take.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn't have any worst experience, the only thing that I feel bad is that</td>
<td>I didn't have any worst experience, the only thing that I feel bad is that I could not take the prerequisites during my first year of college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I couldn't take the classes I wanted to take, so it prevented me from</td>
<td>I couldn't take the classes I wanted to take, so it prevented me from taking elective courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reading class. I thought it was not necessary but was waste of time.</td>
<td>The reading class. I though it was not necessary but was waste of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can't even with what was my worst experience because everything was just</td>
<td>I can't even with what was my worst experience because everything was just perfect. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank CE teacher, advices and staff, thank you, thank you, and thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of the classes were not too challenging.</td>
<td>Some of the classes were not too challenging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would not say that I CE was excellent but then I don't know what was</td>
<td>I would not say that I CE was excellent but then I don't know what was worse neither because everything to me just perfect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of CE Experience Survey

Overall attitudes towards the CE program expressed by former CE students are extremely positive. Students appear to be satisfied with the CE program, its characteristics, and staff.
Responses to items that were intended to measure how well the CE program is providing a supportive environment are rated slightly higher than items that were intended to measure the goal of how well the CE program is building academic literacy. There are a number of program characteristics that are highly rated by former CE students. These areas include instructor overall knowledge and respect, instructor concern for diversity, developing relationships with CE peers, and the physical environment of the CE program (i.e., small class sizes, frequent contact with instructors, etc.).

There are a couple of areas of concern. One area is how well students believe they are prepared for non-CE courses. There are a number of possible reasons why some students believe they are not well prepared. One possibility is many of the students who returned surveys are taking courses in STEM fields that require a different set of academic skills than those focused on in the CE program. A more thorough look at this area would provide insight into the preparation question. A second area of concern is related to the issue of CE students making transfer and career decisions and the advice they received about them. In a couple of different places on the survey former CE students expressed less satisfaction with these components of the program. This is another area where a more thorough inquiry into the nature and causes of dissatisfaction may be beneficial to the program.

Generally speaking, the results reflected a positive view of the CE program. The CE program appears to build a community that allows their students to be successful. These students are very satisfied with their experience, maintain affiliations with their peers, and are confident they will succeed and graduate from the U of MN.
CHAPTER 5: Pre-Post TOEFL Test

Introduction

One of the goals of the CE program is improvement of academic skills, including writing, grammar, and reading comprehension. In order to determine if gains had been made in these areas, students were administered the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) at the end of their first year. The majority of students had TOEFL or MELAB scores prior to entering the CE program. Admission guidelines for selected CE students suggest that their scores on the Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) fall between 65 and 79; this is below the required test scores for other colleges at the University of Minnesota. We administered the institutional TOEFL to CE students in order to compare scores on entry to the program vs. exit from the program.

Materials

The students in this sample took the institutional TOEFL, which consists of three components: listening comprehension, written expression and sentence structure, and reading comprehension. The entire exam was completed in paper-pencil form and students were allowed 115 minutes to complete the three test components. There is an additional writing component to the institutional TOEFL. Students were not asked to complete this component because of the additional expense and time required to complete it. The TOEFL was selected for use for a number of reasons. TOEFL scores can be converted to match MELAB scores, allowing for a pre- and post-score comparison. The TOEFL was an affordable instrument and could be easily administered. Finally, there were a number of other test options but they required a pre-post
administration of the same instrument. In order to use them students would need to take the pre-
test in the beginning of fall term.

Method and Participants

Students in the fall 2005 cohort (n=61) were approached in the classroom and asked to
participate in the TOEFL portion of this evaluation. There are 29 women and 32 men in this
cohort. The racial/ethnic breakdown, as they are reported in the University of Minnesota data
warehouse, are as follows: 11 Asian, 43 Black, 4 Hispanic, and 3 undeclared.

Students were offered a $25 gift card to the University of Minnesota bookstore for their
participation. Thirty-seven students agreed to participate and signed up for a time to take the
examination. Twenty-two students sat for the exam. Two of the 22 students were eliminated
from this analysis. One student left before she completed her exam because she had a prior
commitment. Another student appeared to not work on her test, she left the room for a third of
the time allowed for section two and put her head on her desk for much of sections two and
three. This resulted in 20 students who sat for the entire exam, of which 17 had entry MELAB
scores. There were eight female and 12 males who had valid TOEFL tests. The racial/ethnic
make-up of this group is as follows: 8 Asian, 9 Black, 2 Hispanic, and 1 undeclared. Black
students were underrepresented in this sample.

The exam was given in Appleby Hall on four different days with rooms set up according
to TOEFL requirements. TOEFL scores were converted to equivalent MELAB scores using
conversion tables provided by TOEFL. Students who participated were compared to students
who did not participate on entry MELAB scores and fall term GPA. They did not differ on entry
MELAB scores but there was a difference on fall term GPA. Students who participated earned an average GPA of 3.52, and those who did not participate earned an average GPA of 2.90.

Results

Table 5.1 displays the descriptive statistics for students’ exit TOEFL scores for all 20 students who sat for the entire exam. The average total score for this sample was 508.5, which is at the 34th percentile.

Table 5.1: Converted TOEFL Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Average Subscale Total</th>
<th>Percentile Rank</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>52.95</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48 - 63</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure and Written Expression</td>
<td>49.45</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>42 - 61</td>
<td>5.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>50.35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>46 - 58</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>509.17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>470-597</td>
<td>32.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average MELAB entry score was 69.71, with a range of 63 - 74 (N=17, SD=3.33). This means that this group of students averaged at the 24th percentile. TOEFL scores were converted to MELAB scores in order to compare pre and post scores. The average total converted MELAB score at exit was 72.90, which is at the 33rd percentile. This is a 9 percentile rank increase.

Paired t-tests were used to compare the entry and exit scores for the 17 students who had complete data. There was a statistically significant difference between the two time points (t=2.82, p = .012). This indicates that students’ scores improved over the course of one year. A closer examination of the data demonstrates that four students’ scores decreased, two scored the same, and eleven improved. Figure 5.1 displays the scores at entrance and the amount each student changed. Each dot represents a student; their score on entrance corresponds with their
placement on the X-axis (horizontal) and their placement on the Y-axis (vertical) corresponds to the number of points changed at exit (improved, stayed the same, or decreased). For example, the first dot represents a student who scored approximately a 63 on entrance and improved by about 6 points on exit. Dots that sit on the line indicate students who did not change their score. Those students below the line had a decrease in their scores. Those who did decrease never decreased more than five points, whereas those who increased ranged in an increase of 2 to 15 points.

Figure 5.1: Scatter Plot of MELAB Scores

The exam proctors noticed that several students did not appear to have enough time to complete the exam during the given time. Answer sheets were examined to determine if students completed each section. As expected, all students completed the first section (listening). Three students (15%) did not finish answering questions on section 2 (structure and written expression) and eight students (40%) did not complete questions on section 3 (reading comprehension). It
could be that students comprehend what they read, but their reading speed is slow. This may require them to spend extraordinary time in completing reading assignments, as well as affect their performance on exams.

Summary of TOEFL

The students in this sample significantly improved their ability to listen, write, and read English, as measured by the TOEFL exam. The amount that students scores changed varied, but overall there was an increase in scores between entering and exiting the program. This indicates the CE program is meeting its goal of improving academic literacy. However, there is no established criteria for evaluating how much of an improvement is needed to be successful after leaving the program. Students’ average exit TOEFL scores were still lower than what the University of Minnesota typically accepts for freshman admittance to most colleges (University of Minnesota Admissions, 2006). Prospective U of MN students are expected to earn at least a 550 on the TOEFL, and students in our sample earned on average a 509. Only three students in this sample earned a 550 or higher (15%). Students who scored below a 550 were advised by the program director that they may be less proficient at English than most students they will be taking courses with in future non-CE classes. These students were advised that they are eligible for ESL courses and should take advantage of this opportunity after leaving the CE program.

Not using the writing component of the TOEFL may have brought the total TOEFL scores down. Writing is a substantial component of the CE program, therefore omitting this component does not allow for a true comparison. The writing component should be included in future pre-post tests to get a TOEFL score that reflects a more complete measure of student gains.
Chapter 6: End of Year Commanding English Program Evaluation

Introduction

CE students from the 2005-2006 cohort were asked to complete an end of year program survey. The intent of the survey was to measure the extent to which current students believe the CE program achieves its goals of improving academic literacy and building community. This survey included questions about academic improvement, coursework that contributed to improvements in academic skills, and specific skill development areas, such as reading, writing, and English speaking skills. Students were asked to rate how helpful advisors and the Writing Center staff were to their academic development. Students were also asked to provide written comments about the extent to which their attitudes towards the CE program changed over time, information about instructors and advisors, general comments, and suggestions for improving the program for future students. The End of Year Evaluation is attached as Appendix H.

Materials

The End of Year CE Program Evaluation was designed as a new instrument with the former CE program evaluation survey used as a guide. The survey was developed in consultation with the CE program director for overall content. Specific instructors were targeted for feedback on the survey questions that covered their area of expertise. The ORE staff reviewed the content and incorporated questions based on issues identified in other evaluation findings. Because no further piloting was done, these findings should be viewed as a pilot. Further piloting should be conducted to refine the survey before its next implementation.
Methods and Participants

The End of Year CE Program evaluation was distributed in each of the spring 2006 GC 1422 CE sections. It was determined that this was the most effective way to reach all students in the fall 2005 cohort (n=61). The fall 2005 cohort is 52.5% (n=32) male and 47.5% (n=29) female. The majority of the cohort is black (70.5%, n=43), followed by Asian (18%, n=11), Hispanic (6.6%, n=4) and unknown (4.9%, n=3). All students who attended class the day the survey was handed out were provided a copy of the survey and asked to complete it during class time. Instructors collected the surveys and returned them to the primary investigator. A total of 44 (72%) surveys were returned. Results from the quantitative survey items were entered into a spreadsheet and then analyzed using SPSS. Qualitative responses are reported with small changes made to protect anonymity.

Results

The End of Year CE Program Evaluation contained six components: reading skills, writing skills, English speaking skills, CE characteristics, support services, and open ended questions asking for qualitative feedback on the students’ CE experience. Students were asked to rate items on the following scale: not at all, not much, some, much, very much. Each item choice was assigned a numerical rating, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). Each area of the survey is described below. The percentages presented in the tables below are based on the percent of students who answered each item, not on the total number of surveys returned.

Questions 1 through 3 asked students to rate how much five components of their reading skills improved since September. Responses to each item were very positive with “much” and “very much” selected most frequently. On average, note-taking strategies and understanding
complicated sentences were rated slightly lower than other items. The item rated the highest was increased vocabulary. Responses to question 1 are displayed in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Reading Skill Improvement from End of Year Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>none at all</th>
<th>not much</th>
<th>some</th>
<th>much</th>
<th>very much</th>
<th>average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading speed</td>
<td>2 (4.5%)</td>
<td>2 (4.5%)</td>
<td>6 (13.6%)</td>
<td>22 (50.0%)</td>
<td>12 (27.3%)</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying main idea</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9 (20.9%)</td>
<td>24 (55.8%)</td>
<td>9 (20.9%)</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased vocabulary</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>2 (4.7%)</td>
<td>8 (18.6%)</td>
<td>19 (44.2%)</td>
<td>13 (30.2%)</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding complicated sentences</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>2 (4.7%)</td>
<td>8 (18.6%)</td>
<td>24 (55.8%)</td>
<td>8 (18.6%)</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note-taking strategies</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>2 (4.7%)</td>
<td>11 (25.6%)</td>
<td>17 (39.5%)</td>
<td>12 (27.9%)</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were also asked to rate how much each course in the CE curriculum contributed to their gains in reading skills. Students rated 1421, 1422, 1461, and 1364 as contributing the most to their gains. GC 1051 was rated the lowest followed by 1041 and 1042. Responses to question 2 are displayed in Table 6.2.
Table 6.2: Course Contribution to Reading Skill Improvement from End of Year Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>none at all</th>
<th>not much</th>
<th>some</th>
<th>much</th>
<th>very much</th>
<th>didn't take class</th>
<th>average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GC 1041: Developing College Reading</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (9.8%)</td>
<td>7 (17.1%)</td>
<td>15 (36.6%)</td>
<td>12 (29.3%)</td>
<td>3 (7.3%)</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1042 Reading in Content Area</td>
<td>2 (4.9%)</td>
<td>4 (9.8%)</td>
<td>9 (22.0%)</td>
<td>12 (29.3%)</td>
<td>13 (31.7%)</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1051: College Writing Workshop</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
<td>10 (25.6%)</td>
<td>7 (17.9%)</td>
<td>11 (28.2%)</td>
<td>6 (15.4%)</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1421: Basic Writing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10 (25.0%)</td>
<td>8 (20.0%)</td>
<td>19 (47.5%)</td>
<td>3 (7.5%)</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1422: Writing Laboratory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (14.0%)</td>
<td>14 (32.6%)</td>
<td>22 (51.2%)</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1461: Oral Communication</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (4.7%)</td>
<td>6 (14.0%)</td>
<td>12 (27.9%)</td>
<td>20 (46.5%)</td>
<td>3 (7.0%)</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1364: Literature of the American Immigrant Experience</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>7 (15.9%)</td>
<td>12 (27.3%)</td>
<td>22 (50.0%)</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 4 through 6 asked students to rate their writing skills. Five components of writing skills were identified and rated for how much students believed they had improved since September. Once again, responses to each item were very positive with “much” and “very much” selected most frequently. Writing from other sources (citing) was rated higher than other choices. All other options were rated slightly lower. Responses to question 4 are displayed in Table 6.3.
Table 6.3: Writing Skill Improvement from End of Year Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>none at all</th>
<th>not much</th>
<th>some</th>
<th>much</th>
<th>very much</th>
<th>average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to express point of view (thesis)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (4.7%)</td>
<td>9 (20.9%)</td>
<td>17 (39.5%)</td>
<td>15 (34.9%)</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to organize an essay</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (4.7%)</td>
<td>10 (23.3%)</td>
<td>17 (39.5%)</td>
<td>14 (32.6%)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing from other sources (citing)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>5 (11.6%)</td>
<td>21 (38.8%)</td>
<td>16 (37.2%)</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to revise papers to make them more clear</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>8 (18.2%)</td>
<td>23 (52.3%)</td>
<td>12 (27.3%)</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to edit papers to make the writing grammatically correct</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10 (22.7%)</td>
<td>23 (52.3%)</td>
<td>11 (25.0%)</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were asked to rate how much each course in the CE curriculum contributed to their gains in writing skills. Students rated GC 1421, 1422 and 1364 as contributing the most to their gains in writing skills. GC 1041 was reported as contributing the least, followed by 1042 and 1051. Responses to question 5 are displayed in Table 6.4

Table 6.4: Course Contribution to Writing Skill Improvement from End of Year Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>none at all</th>
<th>not much</th>
<th>some</th>
<th>much</th>
<th>very much</th>
<th>didn't take class</th>
<th>average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GC 1041: Developing College Reading</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>5 (11.6%)</td>
<td>10 (24.4%)</td>
<td>14 (34.1%)</td>
<td>7 (17.1%)</td>
<td>4 (9.8%)</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1042 Reading in Content Area</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>4 (9.8%)</td>
<td>10 (24.4%)</td>
<td>12 (29.3%)</td>
<td>12 (29.3%)</td>
<td>2 (4.9%)</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1051: College Writing Workshop</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>3 (7.3%)</td>
<td>8 (19.5%)</td>
<td>14 (34.1%)</td>
<td>10 (24.4%)</td>
<td>5 (12.2%)</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1421: Basic Writing</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (15.4%)</td>
<td>8 (20.5%)</td>
<td>22 (56.4%)</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1422: Writing Laboratory</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>6 (12.6%)</td>
<td>9 (20.5%)</td>
<td>24 (54.5%)</td>
<td>3 (6.8%)</td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1364: Literature of the American Immigrant Experience</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>2 (4.5%)</td>
<td>9 (20.5%)</td>
<td>7 (15.9%)</td>
<td>24 (54.5%)</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>4.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions 7 through 9 asked students to rate their English speaking skills. Five components of English speaking skills were identified and rated for how much students felt they had improved since September. Once again, responses to each item were very positive with “much” and “very much” selected most frequently. The item rated highest was "participate in a small class discussion". One item, participate in a large class discussion, was rated lower than other items. Responses to question 7 are displayed in Table 6.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>none at all</th>
<th>not much</th>
<th>some</th>
<th>much</th>
<th>very much</th>
<th>average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give a speech.</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>3 (7.1%)</td>
<td>7 (16.7%)</td>
<td>19 (45.2%)</td>
<td>12 (28.6%)</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in a group presentation.</td>
<td>2 (4.7%)</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>11 (25.6%)</td>
<td>15 (34.9%)</td>
<td>14 (32.6%)</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in a small class discussion.</td>
<td>2 (4.9%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>8 (19.5%)</td>
<td>17 (41.5%)</td>
<td>14 (34.1%)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in a large class discussion.</td>
<td>2 (4.7%)</td>
<td>4 (9.3%)</td>
<td>13 (30.2%)</td>
<td>10 (23.3%)</td>
<td>14 (32.6%)</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand other classmates' presentations</td>
<td>2 (4.5%)</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>6 (14.0%)</td>
<td>21 (48.8%)</td>
<td>13 (30.2%)</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were asked to rate which CE courses contributed to their speaking skills. Students rated GC 1421, 1422, and 1461 the highest. GC 1041, 1042, 1051, and 1364 were rated slightly lower. Responses to question 8 are displayed in Table 6.6.
Table 6.6: Course Contribution to English Speaking Skill Improvement from End of Year Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>none at all</th>
<th>not much</th>
<th>some</th>
<th>much</th>
<th>very much</th>
<th>didn't take class</th>
<th>average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GC 1041: Developing College Reading</td>
<td>2 (4.9%)</td>
<td>4 (9.8%)</td>
<td>7 (17.1%)</td>
<td>11 (26.8%)</td>
<td>12 (29.3%)</td>
<td>5 (11.4%)</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1042 Reading in Content Area</td>
<td>2 (4.9%)</td>
<td>2 (4.9%)</td>
<td>11 (26.8%)</td>
<td>12 (29.3%)</td>
<td>12 (29.3%)</td>
<td>2 (4.9%)</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1051: College Writing Workshop</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>4 (9.5%)</td>
<td>8 (19.0%)</td>
<td>12 (28.6%)</td>
<td>12 (28.6%)</td>
<td>5 (11.9%)</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1421: Basic Writing</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>2 (4.7%)</td>
<td>8 (18.6%)</td>
<td>12 (27.9%)</td>
<td>17 (39.5%)</td>
<td>3 (7.0%)</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1422: Writing Laboratory</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>2 (4.8%)</td>
<td>7 (16.7%)</td>
<td>14 (33.3%)</td>
<td>16 (38.1%)</td>
<td>2 (4.8%)</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1461: Oral Communication</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>5 (11.9%)</td>
<td>10 (23.8%)</td>
<td>23 (54.8%)</td>
<td>3 (7.1%)</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1364: Literature of the American Immigrant Experience</td>
<td>2 (4.8%)</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>12 (31.0%)</td>
<td>11 (26.2%)</td>
<td>14 (33.3%)</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each skill area, students were asked to rate how confident they were in their ability to apply the skill in future non-CE courses. Students reported high levels of confidence in all skill areas with confidence in writing skills receiving the highest rating. Responses to the confidence questions (3, 6, and 9) are displayed in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7: Confidence in Ability to Apply Academic Skills from End of Year Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Area</th>
<th>none at all</th>
<th>not much</th>
<th>some</th>
<th>much</th>
<th>very much</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading skills</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (4.8%)</td>
<td>10 (23.8%)</td>
<td>18 (42.9%)</td>
<td>12 (28.6%)</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing skills</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>7 (16.7%)</td>
<td>24 (57.1%)</td>
<td>10 (23.8%)</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking skills</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (7.1%)</td>
<td>11 (26.2%)</td>
<td>15 (35.7%)</td>
<td>13 (31.0%)</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 10 asked students to identify the content courses (non-CE) that contributed to improvement in their ability to do college level work. Each CE student typically chooses two content courses from GC 1131, GC 1135, GC 1211, GC 1285, or GC 1311. Students were asked to select all areas that improved as a result of participating in each content course they enrolled in. Areas available for selection included reading, writing, oral communication, and confidence. Improvements in confidence and reading were selected more frequently than the other areas. In two classes, GC 1131 and 1211, all students who enrolled in the course selected one or more areas. Unfortunately, GC 1135 was inadvertently omitted from the survey; all students who checked GC 1135 wrote it in. Also, for GC 1285, one more student responded to this item than the total registered for it. Aside from the omission and over-reporting, it is clear that these courses are identified as contributing the skill development of the CE students. Responses to question 10 are displayed in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8: Contribution of Content Courses to Improvement in Academic Skills and Confidence from End of Year Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Number Enrolled</th>
<th>Number Responded</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Oral Comm.</th>
<th>Confidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GC 1135: Anatomy and Physiology</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1131: Biology</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1211: People and Problems</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1285: Anthropology</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC 1311: General Art</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 11 asked students to rate how helpful specific characteristics of the CE program were to them. Students rated “cultural differences respected among peers” the highest followed by “small classes”. Responses to all items are displayed in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9: Helpful Characteristics of the CE Program from End of Year Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>none at all</th>
<th>not much</th>
<th>some</th>
<th>much</th>
<th>very much</th>
<th>average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequent contact with instructors</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>2 (4.8%)</td>
<td>11 (26.2%)</td>
<td>14 (33.3%)</td>
<td>14 (33.3%)</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small classes</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (10.0%)</td>
<td>15 (37.5%)</td>
<td>20 (50.0%)</td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to interact with CE peers</td>
<td>2 (4.8%)</td>
<td>4 (9.5%)</td>
<td>9 (21.4%)</td>
<td>9 (21.4%)</td>
<td>18 (42.9%)</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes had supportive learning environment</td>
<td>3 (7.1%)</td>
<td>2 (4.8%)</td>
<td>8 (19.0%)</td>
<td>12 (28.6%)</td>
<td>17 (40.5%)</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program emphasis on cultural diversity</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (11.9%)</td>
<td>18 (42.9%)</td>
<td>18 (42.9%)</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural differences respected among peers</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7 (16.7%)</td>
<td>10 (23.8%)</td>
<td>24 (57.1%)</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet new people and make new friends</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>7 (16.7%)</td>
<td>12 (28.6%)</td>
<td>21 (50.0%)</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 12 through 16 asked students about services and staff of the CE program. Question 12 asked them to rate the helpfulness of the feedback they received from the Writing Center staff. In consultation with a writing consultant, five services were identified. Students rated “grammar/language rules” the highest. The item rated the lowest was “doing research online”. Responses to questions 12 through 16 are displayed in Table 6.10. Students were also asked to rate how useful it was to have writing consultants available in CE writing classrooms. Students reported that this was a useful service with 57.5% (n=23) selecting “very much”. Nine (22.5%) selected “much”, 5 (12.5%) selected “some”, 1 (2.5%) selected “not much” and 2 (5.0%) selected “not at all”.

Table 6.10: Feedback Given When Visiting the Writing Center from End of Year Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>none at all</th>
<th>not much</th>
<th>some</th>
<th>much</th>
<th>very much</th>
<th>didn't use WC</th>
<th>average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding a thesis/main idea</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
<td>14 (35.9%)</td>
<td>16 (41.0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing research online</td>
<td>3 (8.1%)</td>
<td>5 (13.5%)</td>
<td>9 (24.3%)</td>
<td>7 (18.9%)</td>
<td>13 (35.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of content</td>
<td>2 (5.0%)</td>
<td>3 (7.5%)</td>
<td>5 (12.5%)</td>
<td>13 (32.5%)</td>
<td>17 (42.5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar/language rules</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
<td>14 (35.9%)</td>
<td>18 (46.2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation rules</td>
<td>2 (5.0%)</td>
<td>3 (7.5%)</td>
<td>5 (12.5%)</td>
<td>10 (25.0%)</td>
<td>19 (47.5%)</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 13 asked students to rate how knowledgeable they felt their advisor was about University policies. Students were asked to select one statement from four statements that ranged from very knowledgeable to not really understanding University policies. The statement “My advisor was very knowledgeable about University polices” was selected by 74.4% (n=29) students. Nine (23.1%) students selected “My advisor had some knowledge about University policies”. One (2.6%) selected “My advisor really didn’t understand University policies”.

Question 14 asked students to rate how comfortable they were talking with their advisor about concerns they had about their education. Once again students were given a range of statements to select from. Students rated this question relatively high with 52.5% (n=21) students selecting “I felt that I could tell my advisor anything that was bothering me.” Thirty-five percent (n=14) selected “I felt that I could be open with my advisor about many topics but not everything.” Four (10.0%) students selected “I did not feel comfortable discussing some
topics with my advisor” and one (2.5%) student selected “I did not feel comfortable discussing any topic with my advisor”.

Question 16 asked students to rate how helpful the CE program director was. Thirty-two students indicated they had asked the CE program director for help. Of the 32 students, 62% (n=20) selected “very much”, 4 (12.5%) selected “much”, 6 (17.7%) selected “some” and 2 (6.3%) selected “not much”.

Question 17 asked students to rate if they would recommend enrolling in the CE program to their friends. Students rated this item high with 61.9% (26) students selecting “definitely yes” and 19% (n=8) students selecting “probably yes”. The remaining students selected “I’m not sure” (n=5, 11.9%), “probably no” (n=2, 4.8%), and one (2.4%) student selected “definitely no”.

Questions 18 through 21 were open-ended questions that asked students to provide any additional comments they had about the program, instructors, advisors, or suggestions they had for improving the program. An edited version of the comments is provided at the end of the results section. Editing was necessary to eliminate names and language so individual instructors, advisors and staff could not be identified.

Question 18 asked students to describe how their feelings had changed about being in the program. A number of students reported that they felt good about being in the program from the beginning and their feelings had not changed. Other students reported that their feelings had changed to being more positive about the program now than they were in the beginning. The reasons given for the change include the following; access to the U of MN, improvement in their writing, reading, and studying skills, learning they could compete with non-CE students, finding they were able to read and write much more than they expected they could, and gaining an
understanding about the program and its objectives. There were few negative comments. The majority of negative comments were about specific classes such as writing or reading. Other negative comments were related to the curriculum such as courses not being challenging enough. One student commented that their 1422 instructor did not appreciate their hard work.

Question 19 asked students to provide any additional comments they had about their instructors or advisors. Comments about instructors were extremely positive. Students reported that instructors were knowledgeable, kind, helpful, took time for students, and were respectful. CE instructors were named multiple times but content course instructors were also mentioned numerous times and received much praise. The small number of negative comments included feedback such as some teachers were difficult to understand, some teachers confused students, and some teachers need to improve their teaching ability.

Comments about advisors were a bit more mixed than comments about instructors. Students reported advisors were kind, helpful, and capable. The negative comments about advisors included that they could do a better job and one student commented that the advisor wanted them to take courses that were lower than they felt they should be in. There were a few comments that were neither positive nor negative but indicated advisors were okay.

Question 20 asked students to comment on anything else they would like to say about the CE program. Comments covered a breadth of expressions from thanks to the program for what they do, hope for future students benefiting from the program, and an overall “I like everything”. Students commented on specific things they liked about the program such as small class sizes, improvement in their academic skills, the amount they learned, and that with help they can have a better education. Negative comments included wanting more courses to choose from and
specific comments about courses such as the writing course should pay more attention to organization.

Question 21 asked students to provide suggestions for improving the program. There were multiple comments that were fully supportive of the program such as “keep it alive”, “you’re amazing”, and “you’re perfect”. There were a number of comments that focused on the curriculum and included such things as the curriculum could be more challenging, more course choices, and change the reading class. There were also a number of responses that focused on support. These comments included extend Writing Center hours to include evening hours, have a CE club, have a meeting for CE students to discuss and learn from each other, and have second year options.

Table 6.11: CE Student Responses to Open-ended Questions from End of Year Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. If your feelings about being in the CE program have changed since September, in what ways have they changed?</td>
<td>Didn't change because I had good feelings about CE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At first I thought that being CE student will receive less opportunity than other students, but to these days, I am glad that I started from CE, which is not much different from others in U of M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It should have been more challenging, especially towards the end of each semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They changed my soul!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I believe everything I learned from CE was helpful from reading, writing, speaking ability. I had a quite change in reading and doing use a lot but since I enrolled in CE pretty much I improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I will suggest to target on the course work (reading course), and have more class choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I didn't know I can come up reading so many books or writing a lot of pages as I was coming here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I didn’t like it first because I know it wasn't for me, but when they told me I couldn't get out of it I was really mad. But helping you get the right classes really help me a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do something with the writing classes. There is something about the writing that just makes you feel stressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The program is the same, what changes are the students that are in the program because the program helps a lot and gives the opportunity that the university doesn't give. Being in CE program give me the opportunity to know how far I could go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CE has improved my writing skills but I felt that my hard work was barely appreciated in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the 1422 course. When comparing peers papers I could find many errors in their grammar and making sense of what they wrote; in which I thought they learned from than theirs...Whereas mine was more understandable though the instructor didn't care much about this.

Nothing changed, everything is on perfect level!

I have changed in many ways such as my reading and writing skill become good. Small class, which give you a chance to meet with your teachers. It is awesome!

At first times, I thought that I couldn't compete with others student outside CE, but right now while I'm taking Biology class, I know that I have skills to be with others.

I really hate CE program because CE is just waste of time.

I still feel that CE is a very helpful program.

At first I was a little bit uncomfortable because I wasn't really sure about what was the program's objective.

I understand more about how this program is very helpful.

Studying, reading, and writing.

I read many books now.

I feel good about being in CE.

Try to improve what we do in 1041 and 1042 class, plus the class is too long.

Not at all.

I am not feeling them changed but keep up the good work.

19. Please write any additional comments about your instructors and/or GC advisor in the space below. Instructor

Most of instructors in GC are very kind and helpful. However, there are few that are kind difficult to understand about their acts and mouth.

They were good.

One instructor is very knowledgeable in what she was teaching. From her class I have learned a lot especially in reading skill. The study guides is a pain in the ____s but without them, we would not have learned so much.

Many are awesome teachers.

Thanks to all my instructors because without them I won't exist.

They are all helpful, specially two, the rest needs improvement in teaching their classes.

My instructors were all helpful with assignments.

All of my instructors are good and helpful to me and I really appreciate all the hard work they did.

All my instructors where/are very nice, helpful, and respectful. They know what are they doing and know what we need to learn. Thank you for all the time they give me for help me after the classes and in the class.

Some instructors were very helpful, and some confused even more when I asked for help.
One instructor who is one of the best instructors, this is the end of her contract, and we will see a gap in her spot.

One instructor is a very wonderful and helpful instructor I have never meet, she is a good model for the other teachers.

They are awesome.

B-

All instructors were helpful to me when I had problems in their class.

Many instructors are great. I honestly enjoyed their classes, but enjoyed 1211 the most.

I don't like one person, I don't think she is a good person for the Commanding English Program, she doesn't inform people about what they need in order to transfer.

Reading class teacher was the best.

One instructor, very good, hard working she deserve more. Another, good instructor.

One instructor is one best instructor in GC. She is doing great job for the class of reading 1042, she make it interesting and challenging.

Very good, no comment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>19. Please write any additional comments about your instructors and/or GC advisor in the space below. Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The advisor is pretty kind and helpful too. However, any advisor seems to avoid me to take the classes that I'd like to take for my major. She seems want me to take the lower class which would waste my time. But overall, she is kind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is okay, but she could do better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always nice and ready to help me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They were good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn't meet with my advisor because she wasn't helping a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is a very good advisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My advisor is nice and I feel very comfortable talking with her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She was very helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are three advisors and three of them are capable of their jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is ok.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is doing a very good job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She was very helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One doesn't keep track of how students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very, very well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. If there is anything else you would like us to know about things you liked or did not like about the CE program, please comment in the box below.

I like everything about the CE.
I liked the class size, it's small and very active.

The advisor should be more allowing students to take the higher level class that they confident for it, so they would not waste their time and money.

Commanding E should give students more choices in choosing classes.

I think this program is very helpful for me because it not only improve my skill of study but also help me feel confident.

That was hard question. But there were nothing a dislike about things in CE. I liked everything I learned.

Be aware of class diversity. Advice how to socialize.

I like the whole program when I first came but I am so sorry for the future generations.

Not having enough choices to choose from the classes and the reading in content is just waste of time as other students - they fell the same way.

Keep it up!! This program was so helpful I hope it do the same for the rest.

Great instructors (helpful and friendly). I've learned a lot from their experiment.

I just want to thank everyone that make the program and think about those people like me need opportunities to show that with help, we can do and have a better education. I am thankful for the opportunity CE gave to be part of the program.

For the writing course, I suggest that instructors should pay more attention to organization, if what is written makes sense and with correct use of grammar is included.

I wish if we could have more instructor in writing consulting center than.

Everything about CE program is very good and helpful. It is a big privilege having CE program.

Nothing, keep what your doing.

### 21. What suggestions do you have for improving the CE program?

Some courses that seem not necessary, such as basic reading,… should be take off or replace so that the CE student would be able to transfer out to their major earlier.

I don't think the CE program needs to improving because CE is good.

Make it harder. I first semester I remember I have to do study guides for class (this take a lot of time and the most effective studying activity), but in the spring there are not many fun work like that. All that has a lot of reading but fairly easy. We need more classes like 1211.

I think it is good if we can have some meeting for CE students so we can share and discuss what we have learn and from that it could help us to improve and learn from other students from what they have learn from CE.

Yes, I have to say the hour needs to extend in writing center until 6 or 7 pm. Monday and Wednesday. That would be helpful for some students who need more time to work on their paper. That is my opinion and I think that should help.
To have more class choice and allow other students. Have research program. Have CE club. Have for second year to or until transfer.

OK

Everything is great, just get rid of the reading classes that go with course like Human Anatomy and Biology. There not useful.

Keep it up!!!

Just keep it, it's great!

I don't have any suggestions about the program, what I say is that continue doing what it is doing and not stop the dreams of many students.

The workload, although it is college the writing class should slow down on the work load. I believe that one learns by slower phase of work than highly speed as if just trying to complete everything in the calendar for the course. And is it not learning what matters? Rather than load work completed?

Instead of having 10 pages of writing, 2 pages for each week on different topic will be more beneficiary because we will work without pressure and will get more help from any source in CE.

Give more choice on classes.

Keep it alive!!

Make the subject a little harder.

CE program is the bomb.

Your perfect and amazing.

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**Summary of End of Year Evaluation**

Students’ responses indicate that all academic skill areas; reading, writing, and oral communication, improved over the course of the academic year. Overall, writing skills were rated highest and reading skills were rated lowest. The CE core courses (1421, 1422, 1461, and 1364) were rated higher in contribution to improvements in skills than the CE support courses (1041, 1042, and 1051). Students expressed less confidence in their ability to speak in front of classes than write or read in future non-CE classes. However, because we do not have a pre-program confidence rating, it is unknown if confidence in these skills improved equally or differently throughout the program. Students reported high levels of satisfaction with various
components of the CE program, including cultural diversity, learning communities, and small classes.

Students reported high satisfaction with student service personnel, including writing consultants, the program director, and advisors. Students did comment that they would like more support from advisors to enroll in more challenging courses. All CE students reported using the Writing Center. Based on the Writing Center use logs, we know that as a group they visited a writing consultant 1008 times in fall 2005 and 901 times in spring 2006. Students use this resource frequently and this may contribute to both gains and satisfaction with the writing component of the CE program.

The qualitative comments from students indicate that they would like greater choices in their classes. Some suggested that the reading course could be removed from the curriculum to provide space for classes of their choice. Students indicated an appreciation for the opportunities and support given to them from the CE program. It can be concluded from the qualitative comments that most students believe they experienced individual academic growth and have the ability to be successful as University students.
CHAPTER 7: Interviews with CE Staff

Introduction

Interviews were conducted with CE staff (instructors, advisors, program director) to evaluate how well they feel the program is meeting its stated goals, as well as the needs of the students. Almost all of current CE staff participated in interviews, and two former advisors also participated. Below we summarize the content of these interviews.

Method

The CE staff were informed of the study at a staff meeting, and then contacted by ORE staff by e-mail. Interviews were structured, using specific questions (Table 7.1). However the interviewer did probe for further detail or elaboration on these questions. Interview questions 2 – 7 were designed after reviewing the stated goals of CE, meeting with administrators and identifying their concerns, and reviewing the preliminary transcript analysis. Question 1 was asked in order to provide the interviewer with some context for the interviewee. Interviews were conducted face to face and took place in either the staff member’s office or the ORE office. They were digitally recorded and transcribed by the interviewer within four days of the interview. Responses were analyzed using a thematic analysis by the same researcher who completed the interviews. Because similar issues arose in responses to questions, the themes that emerged are described below. For many of the concerns that were identified, participants also proposed potential solutions, therefore, when available, proposed solutions are presented below the description of the theme.

Table 7.1: Interview Questions

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>How long have you worked in the CE program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>In what ways do you feel the program is working well?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>What are concerns that you have about the effectiveness of the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>How well do you feel the learning communities are meeting the needs of the students?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Do you feel that the students are well prepared for outside coursework when they leave the CE program? What have you observed that has informed your opinion about students’ preparedness?

6. What concerns, if any, do you have about the way that the CE program is currently being implemented?

Advisors Only

7. Can you speak to the process behind students taking a heavy STEM semester in their first semester after CE?

Results

Generally speaking CE staff reported great satisfaction with the CE program. Everyone reported feeling that it is a strong and necessary program. The findings below touch on both the strengths and areas of concern of the program, however it seemed that all felt the strengths outweighed the areas of concern.

Personal Connection with Students

Instructors and advisors reported that students usually have a strong personal connection to at least one CE staff member, often more than one. Students are provided with support from the CE program in a number of ways, including relationships with instructors, advisors, writing consultants, and tutors. Because of this connection, CE staff are able to reach out to students when they are having difficulties, and help students stay connected to the University rather than leaving. They may do this through encouragement and accommodations. Additionally, this connection may be maintained throughout the students’ time at the University, allowing students to return to CE instructors and advisors anytime for advice and counsel.

People felt that this connection is a strength of the program, however a couple of limitations were mentioned. One staff member felt that having to reach out, provide accommodations, and always be available could lead to staff burnout. She felt that there needed to be more balance. Secondly, others discussed the difficulty students experienced when
transitioning to more impersonal classrooms after the completion of the CE program. There was concern that providing accommodations, such as allowing them to miss weeks of class and then assist them in catching up, may provide students with unrealistic expectations about what they can expect in future classes. Another problem with this strong connection is that some students didn’t know how to ask for help from non-CE instructors and TAs when it wasn’t being offered to them directly.

Academics

Many staff members reported that the curriculum is strong, and the staff worked collaboratively to make sure that it is well integrated. Because the staff know each other well and most have worked in CE for several years, they are able to provide students with consistency in expectations and grading. Having the Writing Center as a resource is another strength of the program. The writing sequence was mentioned most frequently as a strength of the curriculum. Staff members felt that students learn a great deal in this sequence and there is improvement in students’ writing skills throughout the year. Another class mentioned often as working well was the literature course. One person stated that the literature class allows the CE students to be the expert in the classroom, and non-CE students are able to learn from the CE students’ experiences. Several stated that in these courses the instructor focuses on the students’ strengths, allowing them to take pride in their work, build confidence, and feel valued. CE staff seemed to unanimously agree that CE students improve their academic skills throughout their year in the CE curriculum.

Another important piece of the curriculum is building confidence in students. Some feel that CE students enter CE with little awareness of their own skills and talents. The CE curriculum is designed to draw upon the gifts that the student brings to their classes, and
especially their writing. Some people commented that CE students learn how to voice their ideas and opinions within their writing and in the classroom.

The reading course was mentioned frequently as a weakness in the curriculum. Identified reasons included: not certain what the goals of the course are, students do not understand why they have to read more in the reading class than the content class, disconnection between reading class and content class, lack of involvement of the content course instructor, and uncertainty if students would have learned these skills anyway or already knew them. However, some felt that students later recognize that what they learned in this course helped them in future coursework.

Another challenge facing the CE program is defining its goals and finding means of assessing whether those goals have been met. Staff identified that finding adequate measures of success has been difficult, and therefore there is no uniform way of knowing whether or not the student is ready to transfer. Other staff members felt that if the student was passing the CE courses, which are equivalent to other college courses, then the student should be ready to move on and the passing grade is itself a measure of success.

Proposed CE Staff Solutions

Instructors provided some potential solutions to the reading course issues. One suggested bringing in a specialist in reading curriculum to review their syllabi and make recommendations. Another suggested revising the goals of the class in a way that could help students and instructors understand the purpose more clearly. Another suggestion was to ask the content class instructors to attend some CE training and meetings with CE staff to build greater integration between the reading course and the content course.

A suggestion was made to build in a review of the students’ work over the course of the year to identify whether or not each particular student made enough progress to transfer out of
the program. This would allow the program to determine if it is meeting its stated goals, and
students would not prematurely be taking courses they are not ready for.

*The Students*

*Access*

Staff spoke often of the window of opportunity being afforded to CE students through the
CE program. Without this program, these students would not be able to attend the University.
This program allows them to attend college courses, receive credit for them, and acclimate to the
college classroom. Many believe that this experience is what enables these students to have a
high persistence and graduation rate. Providing access is undoubtedly a strength of the program.

*Students’ Preparedness for CE*

Staff noted that there is diversity in preparedness among the students to meet the
challenges of the University. Staff reported that some students had less preparation than others
because they had little formal academic training due to disrupted educations in their former
countries. Some staff expressed concern that a small group of students may not be ready to
experience the rigors of college. They felt that these students are helped by the CE curriculum,
but are too behind to excel in future coursework. This is especially of concern for math or
chemistry classes in which some students have little preparation before entering college even
though they are attempting to enter majors that require advanced math and science coursework.
This problem is intensified by the fact that math and chemistry is not incorporated into the CE
curriculum. Therefore the students may not have the benefit of taking these hard classes while in
their learning community. Other staff commented that there is often a group of students who are
not challenged by the CE curriculum and do not seem to need to be in CE.
**Motivation, Talent, and Persistence**

Many staff members commented on personality traits of the average CE student. They were identified as a motivated, talented and persistent group of young adults. Many of the CE students come from impoverished and/or warring countries, and therefore have survived and persevered through difficult circumstances. The personal qualities that have assisted students in persisting through difficult circumstances also help them persist in college and do well in their courses. Most students enter the program motivated and approach their coursework with a strong work ethic. However, one staff member noted that there are usually a few students who visibly lack the motivation to succeed, and consequently usually leave the University early in their scholastic career.

Conversely, there is a shadow side to their persistence. Many students enter the program with high aspirations and want to enter fields that require some of the most challenging coursework, such as medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and engineering. Some CE advisors and instructors felt that many students are unprepared for the challenges that these majors require, such as advanced math and chemistry, due to interrupted schooling during their childhood and adolescence. Many students repeat these courses, sometimes more than once, with the belief that if they try harder they will do better. Advisors reported that even if they advise against taking a heavy course load of math and science in students’ first semester outside of CE, students often ignore this advice because they feel that if they try hard enough they will be successful. Another aspect of this persistence is that students’ family and community members often encourage students to pursue majors that are desired in their community and place enormous pressure on the student to work harder in the field the community respects most. This thinking does not allow for flexibility in approaching choice of major.
Proposed CE Staff Solutions

Several suggestions were made regarding either the lack of motivation or the problems that coincide with the persistent personality. One staff member suggested that, if possible, the recruitment process could include an interview to assess students’ motivation level. It was argued that students’ readiness to work in the program was usually apparent at orientation, and therefore could be apparent in an interview.

There were proposed solutions to coping with students’ inflexibility regarding major choice. These included providing a mandated career development course, career workshops, and incorporating career education into the existing coursework. For example, many students appear to disregard the challenges in getting into health science careers, but if they were required to listen to representatives from those careers or people who worked in the admissions process, they may be more willing to realistically view their own probabilities of getting into these programs. Also, a career development course may help students recognize the great diversity of choices available to them beyond the obvious choices. Another suggestion was that families and community leaders from represented groups could be targeted for education about career choices and the challenges facing students who want to enter health science or engineering majors. Finally, one staff member suggested that the CE program should bring in former CE students more frequently to assist the current students in understanding the challenges that lay ahead.

Some also questioned the lack of math and chemistry courses in the CE curriculum. They felt that students would benefit by finding a way to incorporate these choices into the curriculum. One advisor also stated that she would require former CE students who she still advised to visit her once a week the first semester out of CE. She put in more time with CE
students that semester than when they were in the program because she wanted to monitor how they did in their math and science courses.

Staff Interactions

Staff members spoke highly of one another, stating that they have worked together for many years and have created a safe and trusting environment. People seemed to have a high level of respect for each others’ talents, abilities, and willingness to work together. One person pointed to the lack of turnover as a demonstration of their high level of dedication to the program and the students. Many commented on the fact that they work together as a unified team when there are any signs of problems with a particular student. Staff also described this collaboration as necessary in meeting the program goal of a highly integrated curriculum, however several people noted that they would like more collaboration with GC faculty who are not identified CE staff. Only a few problematic areas were mentioned. This included a feeling that advising and instruction were not as well integrated this past academic year with some CE students seeing an advisor outside of the CE program. Also related to advising, one former advisor felt that advisors’ opinions were not valued as much as instructors and administrators in the decision making process. A final critique was that, sometimes, decisions were not communicated systematically to staff, e.g. when someone missed a staff meeting they were not provided with minutes from that meeting.

Learning Communities

CE staff members identified learning communities as a strength of the program, although some felt that there were some drawbacks to them. As addressed above, learning communities provide communication across levels allowing for greater integration of curriculum and advising. But they also provide students with a feeling of safety on a large campus because they are not
immediately in classrooms in which they are one of few students who are of color or speak English as a second language. Students develop a community immediately that they can carry forward into their remaining years on campus. In this community they grow from watching each other grow, academically and socially. For example, some students may enter college with a dismissive attitude, or what one staff member labeled a high school attitude, but as they watch their peers approach academics seriously, they may develop more positive attitudes as well.

There were a few drawbacks identified when using learning communities. One is that CE students do not have a choice about being in a learning community. It could be that they have chosen to attend the U of MN to be on a large campus, and now find themselves back in a small group of people isolated from the rest of the University. Another drawback is that if there is conflict in one class, it can carry over to the other classes. Therefore an instructor may not be aware that a conflict between students which began in a previous class has entered her classroom. The final drawback is again related to transfer. After being in this isolated and safe community, students then transfer to a larger impersonal college where there may be few students of color. Many students have reported back to CE staff that this is a difficult adjustment to make.

Proposed CE Staff Solution

A solution proposed to the issue of carryover conflict was to limit the amount of courses that CE students take together as a group. It was stated that having as many as five classes together may be too much, and three would be a better number. Another person suggested that the way learning communities are presented to students could be framed differently; an emphasis could be placed on the ways learning communities decrease isolation through community building, rather than create isolation.
Summary of Interviews

The CE staff gave much positive feedback about the CE program. The strengths included a strong team of dedicated faculty, advisors, and administration that works well together and provides the students with a well-integrated curriculum. CE staff go out of their way to establish personal connections to the students and try to build their confidence before they transfer to other programs. Several areas of the curriculum are viewed as highly effective in improving students’ academic skills, including the writing program and the literature class. CE staff also spoke highly of the students, who they consider to be a talented and motivated group who persevere when faced with challenges.

Most areas of concern were somehow related to students’ academic success after they transfer out of CE. Several staff members voiced concern that students either were unprepared due to under preparation in math and science previous to entering college, or they had been too sheltered while in CE and left unprepared to face more difficult classes and more impersonal settings.
CHAPTER 8: Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion

Summary

This evaluation was designed to answer the following questions about the CE program:

1. To what extent is the CE program meeting its goal of building academic literacy?
   - To what extent did students’ reading skills improve?
   - To what extent did students’ academic writing improve?
   - How skilled are students at using grammar correctly?

2. How well is the CE program meeting its goal of providing a supportive environment?
   - To what extent do students perceive supportive services (e.g. writing center) as helpful in meeting their needs?
   - To what extent do learning communities facilitate feelings of connection to peers and CE staff?

3. To what extent has the CE program implemented activities as planned?
   - What perceptions do students have of the multiculturalism focus in the classroom?
   - To what extent is the curriculum integrated?

The evaluation suggests that CE is meeting its goals and providing additional benefits to students and staff.

Building Academic Literacy

The primary goal of the CE program is to improve students' academic literacy. Both current and former students reported improvements in their writing, reading, and oral presentation skills over the course of the academic year. Staff also believed that these skills were improved, especially writing skills. The TOEFL scores validated this belief, as the average score
was higher at exit from the program than on entry. Staff identified that confidence in one’s skills is necessary in order to succeed, and students also reported an improvement in confidence.

Providing a supportive environment

The secondary, but also important goal of CE is to provide a supportive environment. Both current and former students reported that program staff members were highly supportive. In addition, students reported valuing and maintaining their relationships with other CE students. Staff members also identified personal connections within the CE community as an important and satisfying aspect of the program.

Multiculturalism and Program Integration

Survey responses suggest that students recognized and valued the multicultural focus of the curriculum. The course on immigrant literature was recognized as an especially powerful statement of the multicultural focus of the program. Two concerns about program integration were reported. The first is the perception that advisors are less integrated into the staff than they might be. The second is the belief that the reading course lacks clear objectives and is not strongly tied to paired content courses.

Additional Benefits to Students

The CE program provides many benefits to student participants. Without this program, these students would not be admitted to the University of Minnesota, therefore the program provides them with a window of opportunity that would not be provided otherwise. During the year long program, almost all students are retained across cohorts. This may be due to a supportive atmosphere provided by instructors and advisors, and also the community built amongst the students themselves. Former CE students have been retained at a slightly higher rate than other former GC students after transfer (Connor, Franko, Wambach, 2005). This is a
testimony to the strengths of the CE program, such as learning communities that can be maintained throughout a student’s university career.

**Benefits to Staff**

Staff reported that they felt satisfaction in their work with CE students, and believed they work as a cohesive unit. They viewed each other as resources and experts in their given area. There has been little turnover in instructors, indicating a positive work environment.

**Areas of Concern**

In addition to the positive outcomes associated with the CE program, the evaluation identified several areas of concern that future staff and administrators should consider in program planning and implementation.

**Development of Students’ Reading Skills**

Both students and staff reported satisfaction with most of the curriculum and instruction of the CE program, with the exception of the reading course. Staff viewed this course as problematic and felt the goals of the course need to be revisited. The fact that students who took the TOEFL struggled to finish the reading comprehension portion of the exam supports the belief that this is a weakness of the program. Students identified reading and test taking as areas where there was less growth than other areas, such as writing and oral presentations.

**Students’ Academic Performance After Transfer**

The transcript analysis and interviews with CE staff indicate that students’ academic achievements after transferring are another area of concern. Many students enter college with the intention of majoring in STEM fields. However, during the year that they are supported in CE, they typically take only one science course. This leaves students with little support for their first science and math courses, and also results in students enrolling in several STEM courses.
their first semester out of CE. Many students do poorly in their first non-GC math and science courses, especially chemistry. At the same time students are taking these increasingly difficult courses, they are also adjusting to being in larger classes with less diverse student populations, and more impersonal instruction. Students’ transfer GPAs would indicate that not all students are able to make these adjustments successfully. Many students decided to change majors, but often not before repeating and failing several courses.

**Areas of Concern for Staff**

Generally speaking, staff spoke highly of their work environment. However a few areas of concern were mentioned. Some reading instructors stated that they would like to be able to work more closely with content course instructors. Reading instructors also expressed concern that the goals and objectives of the reading course are not clear. More clear communication within CE is desired. Finally, there are aspects of the program that can lead to frustration and fatigue. These include spill-over conflict from one classroom to the next, and a requirement to be available, flexible and attentive to the needs of current and former students.

**Recommendations**

**Admissions**

Instructors stated that some students are under-prepared and some are over-prepared for the CE program. The CE program’s policy is to admit students whose MELAB scores range between 65 – 79. It is possible that this range is too large. In addition, some students are admitted with scores below 65 which further increases the range. CE administration should consider whether or not this is an appropriate range for admission to the CE program. Additionally, the use of standardized testing does not allow for an assessment of motivation. An
interview process for applicants may address issues of motivation and provide a place to assess whether or not students possess the necessary academic background to benefit from the program.

**Program Goals and Objectives**

We recommend CE staff revisit the goals and objectives of the program to make sure they reflect the intent of the program, and are clearly built into each course. Communication about the intended goals and objectives and their integration into the curriculum should be overt. Additionally, there is no established criteria for expected improvement in literacy skills, therefore it cannot be determined if students have improved their skills enough to progress to more challenging coursework in less supportive environments. We also feel it would be useful to create a continuous feedback loop throughout the year that allows for measuring skill development in relation to the goals and objectives. Each student would be provided with feedback describing how well he or she is progressing towards each goal.

**Writing**

The writing program is clearly a strength of CE; however based on feedback from the students, we feel some shorter writing projects in courses would be helpful. This would allow students to develop skills necessary for writing essays in future non-CE classes, especially on exams.

**Reading**

The reading classes could be improved by clearly identifying objectives for each component of the reading classes and communicating these objectives to students. Another recommendation suggested by an instructor is to bring in an outside reading professional over the summer to review syllabi and work with instructors on ways to build in reading pedagogy to
improve student reading speed, accuracy and comprehension. We agree that this would be useful in rethinking the reading component of the program.

Math and Chemistry

We recommend that CE staff incorporate additional course offerings in the CE program to offer a STEM path and a non-STEM path. This will allow students who are pursuing a degree in a STEM major the opportunity to take their initial courses in the supportive CE environment. There are a number of ways this could be done. GC 1166 could be offered in the CE program with a CE instructor. A Supplemental Instruction (SI) section could be offered in the CE program for students taking math from the Math department. This would allow students to adjust to a more impersonal classroom in difficult subjects, while still remaining closely connected to the program and other CE students. Another possibility is eliminating the reading section for GC 1311 which seems to be problematic, and adding a reading section for a Math or Chemistry class.

More attention should be given to CE students’ initial math registration. Students who take math after leaving the CE program are clearly not following their initial math placement recommendation. We recommend that students’ math placement be re-assessed if they delay registering for math until their second year of college. We also recommend that students who take math while enrolled in the CE program should be encouraged to follow their math placement recommendation, since taking the recommended course is associated with earning higher grades.

Career Development

Many instructors and advisors reported that students demonstrated inflexibility regarding career choice. Conversely, a few students reported feeling they were not supported by advisors when choosing difficult courses needed to pursue their desired major. Because students are not
given the chance to take several STEM courses their first year, advisors have little to fall back on when advising students not to take several STEM courses their first semester post-CE. Several options could help alleviate this tension. One is to bring in former CE students to discuss their experiences in STEM courses after leaving CE. Another is to educate CE students and their families as a group, thus minimizing alienation, about the multitude of careers available to them. Finally, some of the suggestions made above, such as adding a chemistry option and/or a supplemental instruction to math classes into the curriculum, may help alleviate this issue.

Post CE Support

To address the isolation and lost feelings that students experience after leaving the CE program, we offer four suggestions. A “support” group could be offered where former CE students could get together. This meeting could be facilitated by someone in the CE program. A second suggestion is to create a virtual blog for CE students to encourage former students staying connected and sharing questions, experiences, etc. A third suggestion is to develop a mentoring program between former and current CE students. A final suggestion is that students have regular meetings with their CE advisor during their first semester outside of CE.

Support to CE Staff

Our final recommendation is that CE staff have a discussion about making exceptions for students and putting students needs above their own. We recognize that this group of students has a unique history and these circumstances should be taken into consideration when receiving a request for an exception to class policy. However, providing extraordinary accommodations can be problematic for two reasons. One, students may come to expect that accommodations will be made for them in future courses with large enrollments, which is highly improbable. Second, this can lead to staff burn out and fatigue. The CE staff is an exceedingly dedicated group of
people, but as is the case with any group of helpers, they need to consistently revisit their own boundaries and self-care strategies.

Limitations of Evaluation Design

Several limitations to the evaluation design should be noted. One, there was a low response rate to student participation tasks. We had hoped to interview former students; however only one agreed to an interview and therefore this component was not included in the final evaluation report. Both the TOEFL and CE Experience Survey had low response rates as well. Most likely the TOEFL had a low response rate due to the labor involved in the task. This low number restricts the power of the statistical analyses and the generalizability of the results. We were able to determine that those who participated in the TOEFL had higher GPAs fall term than those who did not participate, indicating that our sample is somewhat different than the entire CE population. This may also be true of the students who participated in the CE experience survey, however we do not have that data.

A second limitation is the lack of a pre-post examination of a writing sample. Due to timing constraints, we were unable to obtain a writing sample previous to the evaluation being conducted. Although both students and staff indicated that student’s writing improved over the course of the program, we were unable to directly observe if that was the case. We also did not have a pre-post assessment of oral communication.

A third limitation was the time-line the evaluation was conducted under was too short. We were not able to complete extensive piloting of the surveys. Also, we were not able to pursue interviews with former CE students or redesign that portion of the evaluation. Though we feel we have a fairly comprehensive evaluation of the CE Program, some components of the
evaluation could have been more substantial if we would have had a longer time frame to work in.

Conclusion

CE allows under-prepared immigrant students to attend the U of M in a supportive program designed to increase their English literacy, academic confidence and sense of belonging. This evaluation suggests that CE students experience substantial benefits from their participation in the program. However ongoing concerns remain about students’ post-CE performance and the alignment of the program’s objectives with students’ career aspirations. In addition, further evaluation of the program’s effectiveness will benefit from more specific articulation of expected student outcomes and systematic collection of data about the development of students’ skills.
References and Sources of Information


Christensen, Fitzpatrick, Murie, and Zhang (2005). Building voice and developing academic literacy for multilingual students: The Commanding English Model.


Interviews with Robin Murie, CE Program Director, and Dan Detzner, Associate Dean and Director of Academic Affairs and Curriculum, and Commanding English staff (2005-2006)


