Amesbury Early College Program: Second-Year Outcomes

John E. Leonard  
*University of Massachusetts Boston*, Jack.Leonard@umb.edu

Sue Grolnic  
*Northern Essex Community College*

Roy Hamond  
*Amesbury High School*

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## Summary/Abstract

Five-year longitudinal community-based program evaluation reports annually on outcomes for early college program for academically average students, grades 10-12, in a suburban high school partnership with MA community college. Mixed methodology uses surveys, interviews, and qualitative student data to illuminate program design, measure student outcomes, investigate changes in teaching practice and examine effective leadership practices. Two-year results show impressive credit accumulation and improved college readiness skills in students. Strong support mechanisms promote student success. Program is now being replicated in other communities.

## Approaches and Methods

Community-based research, using concurrent mixed methods for five-year, longitudinal program evaluation.

**Research Questions:**
1. Are the EC students truly average?
2. Are the EC college courses truly rigorous?
3. What are the outcomes for the EC students?
4. To what extent has the EC program made students more college-ready?
5. How has the program changed teaching practice and expectations?
6. How does student support change for an early college program?
7. What funding mechanism will provide sustainability?
8. What leadership characteristics support early college partnerships?

**Sample Population:**
1. Suburban high school, 600 students.
2. MA community college
3. Academically average students (report cards in B – C range) begin taking regular college courses in grade 10.
4. Opportunity to earn as many as 45 credits by graduation.

**Data Sources & Instruments**
1. Student demographic and assessment data
2. Student surveys/interviews
3. Parent focus group interviews
4. Teacher/leader interviews
5. Classroom observations
6. Course material analysis

## Results/Impact

**Course Rigor:**
1. Instructors for most courses are regular college faculty.
2. Students use authentic college textbooks, syllabi, assignments, and assessments.
3. Students receive college IDs and full access to Blackboard and campus facilities.

**Second-Year Outcomes:**
1. 53 sophomore students (Classes 2012, 2013) and 29 juniors (Class 2012) attempted 843 college credits and successfully earned 771 credits, a success rate of 91% or 9.4 college credits/student/year.

**College Readiness Skills?**
1. “This course requires me to do more writing than any other course” – student.
3. Yet, students still study only 1 hour/day.
4. “It makes you realize how important the future is.” – student.

Teachers report new gains in co-teaching methodologies, better understanding of college readiness skills. Shared responsibility splits costs between high school, college, and families. Parent contribution enables increased student support mechanisms.

## Conclusion/Next Steps

**Conclusions:**
1. Faculty is essential to program success.
2. Guidance support is indispensable.
3. The co-teaching model must be preserved through careful scheduling.
4. College Success skills require annual reinforcement.
5. The voices of parents, teachers and students proved indispensable....

**Next Steps:**
1. Program evaluation will continue through 2014.
2. The Amesbury model will be shared and implemented in other communities.

## References and Resources


## Additional Partnerships, Information and/or Contacts

The Amesbury Early College model is now being replicated in other high schools, including:
- Haverhill MA
- North Andover MA
- Billerica MA

Sue Grolnic, Northern Essex Community College
Les Murray, NECC